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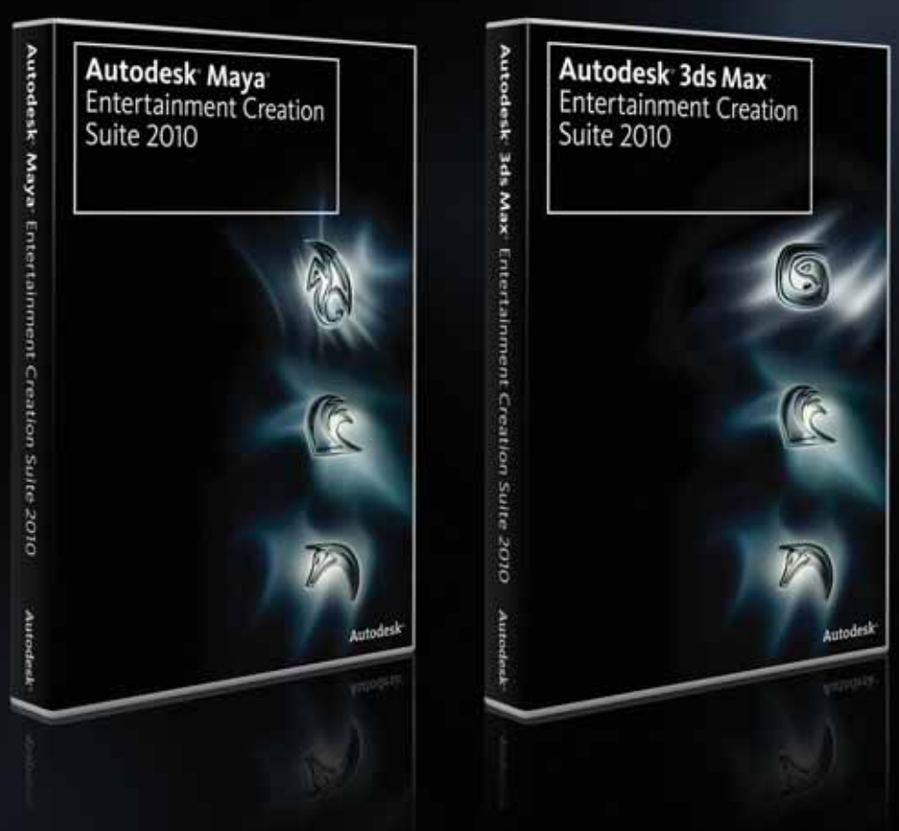
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ALPHA
ADVENTURES IN GAMES DEVELOPMENT: NEWS, VIEWS & MORE

"Many have expressed the belief that there won't be a new generation of consoles…"
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Deep Silver CEO talks expansion
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Are you a 'casual' developer?
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Bringing your games to Xbox Live Arcade
Guide, p15

'Move will win over core gamers'

Lol Scragg, CEO of Dundee studio Cohort, expects new controller can grow PlayStation 3 audience for games developers

by Rob Crossley

THE CORE gamer market's disinterest with motion control gaming has never been more apparent than it is right now.

With Sony and Microsoft now completing the motion control triumvirate, the message routinely emphasised across numerous internet forums is simple: core gamers don't want to shake, waggle and swipe their way through a night in with their consoles.

That's all about to change, says the CEO of emerging Dundee outfit Cohort Studios.

In an interview with *Develop*, Lol Scragg says that both Microsoft and Natal will tap into the core market with their own first-party efforts.

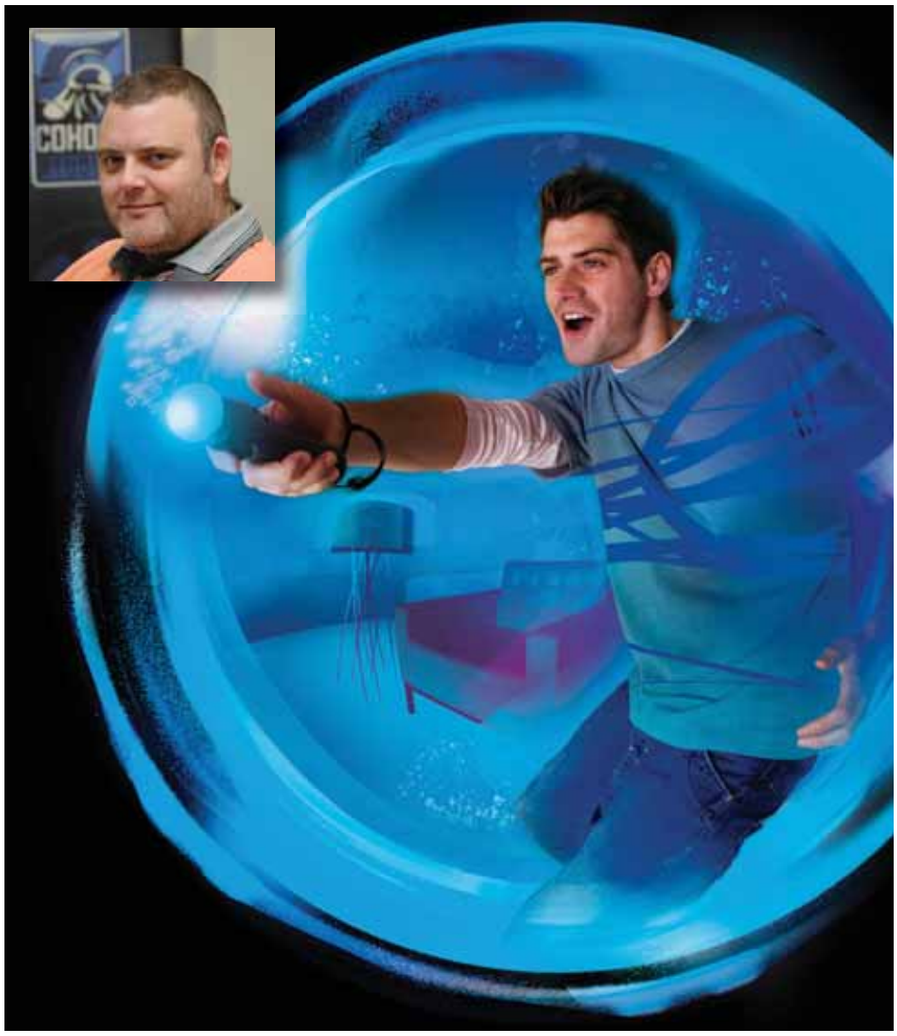
"I understand that, if you see any of the forums, you'll read people state they don't need motion control, but that's because they're familiar with the Wii," said Scragg.

"Once Sony and Microsoft start releasing their own games for their motion controllers, I think the core will come round to it."

Cohort Studios is currently building one of the first games to be released on the PlayStation Move – an on-rails shooter given the working title *The Shoot*.

Having worked with Sony's new motion controller since its earliest days, Scragg was very keen to heap praise on Sony and its upcoming motion control peripheral.

"[It's] a great piece of hardware," he said.



"It has a fantastic feel to it and it's incredibly accurate. We've had no issues with it, and the hardware and the libraries have come on well."

And when asked if it was fair to compare the tech to the Wii equivalent, Scragg said that Nintendo's five-year-old device doesn't hold a candle to Sony's new tech.

"Having used both controllers a lot, I'd say it was clear that the Move controller is so much more accurate. Its a step up. And it's not just across the X and Y axis either, the Z axis is really accurate as well."

The interview with Scragg (available at www.develop-online.net) is an appetiser to *Develop*'s full three-course exploration of the PlayStation Move, which you can begin to chew into from page 36.

Elsewhere in the Cohort interview, Scragg touched on the difficulties facing third-party studios at the moment.

"Like all independent developers, times are tough," he said. "People just aren't commissioning products for anyone right now."

He added, having been in meetings with various companies at GDC, the publishing business has seen its product remit plummet.

> ***"It's clear that the Move controller is so much more accurate."***
> Lol Scragg, Cohort

"One told me that the remit for the year was to find two new franchises. Two?! The past twelve months has seen a significant drop in the number of projects commissioned.

"My hope is, somewhere along the lines, publishers are going to realise that there's not much product set up for Christmas 2010 and the first half of 2011, and they're going to have to start picking up more stuff.

"The level of pessimism around right now goes against the market, which is strong and continuing to expand."

■ *Turn to page 36 for more on the PS Move.*

Editorial

Keeping the pace

THERE HAS BEEN a lot of suggestions that this current console cycle could be the last for games developers, and thus create more stability for studios.

The thinking goes that that disruption by new mobile devices and the diffusion of players from to a variety of web-enabled platforms means that PS4 and Xbox 720 are becoming less likely. In turn, developers will be freed from the constraints of format holders and empowered by the *laissez-faire* world of digital distribution.

What a load of nonsense! If anything, the rapid acceleration of handheld platforms, new controllers and increased agility offered by the web complicates the business of games development even further. It makes constant innovation the rule, not the exception.

This month we take a look at two clear examples of this: PlayStation Move and the iPad.

It's no insult to call the latter an oversized iPhone. With its nice big screen and appealing form factor, it expands beyond the limitations of its progenitor.

But as the developers we speak to from page 18 onwards explain, that's both a good and bad thing. The big screen create fill-rate issues, for instance; the A4 chip is not a magic bullet for more advanced mobile graphics.

And iPad isn't just a device that games developers can expect to claim a chunk of the marketplace as quick as they did iPhone. It's as designed for new websites and digital books, too – all of which compete with games.

Sony's Move, meanwhile, is generating more excitement - it's not out for about six months, so cautious optimism is expected - but likewise, that also demands different thinking from its development base.

So both are a classic case of generational jumps keeping developers on their toes. (And, if you check out page 12, something that will clearly continue.)

It's not just Sony and Apple that are pushing devices that encourage – no, force – developers to keep up.

Natal, 3DS, the rush to 3D from all corners… all are proof of rapid acceleration of hardware towards diversity, not away from it. Which means studios aren't necessarily going to have an easier ride. While the opportunities are plentiful, yes, the pressure to make sure developers place the right bets couldn't be higher.

Michael French
michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

Deep Silver set for

Distribution and publishing firm looks to grow stable of studios and

by Stuart Richardson

European games giant Koch Media plans to seriously grow and 'strengthen' its development resource through new acquisitions.

Speaking exclusively to Develop, Dr. Klemens Kundratitz – CEO of the developer-distributor-publisher which runs the Deep Silver label – said he wants to "strengthen Deep Silver's line-up of brands".

Dr. Kundratitz told us that development deals will help the firm ride out the industry shift into digital distribution and casual gaming that has otherwise forced many publishers to reconsider their current business models.

Deep Silver and its parent Koch Media hopes to use both its global physical distribution business and digital distribution platforms as it signs new games and potentially buys studios.

"Our objective is to create great games that sell worldwide. We strive to achieve this by working closely with a vast network of like-minded development partners," Dr. Kundretitz said.

"We have published and distributed over a hundred titles this way since 2003, including *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Clear Sky*, the *X* series, *Sacred 2: Fallen Angel* and recently *Risen*, the new RPG from Piranha Bytes."

Deep Silver has provided a mixture of publishing, distributing and PR in various combinations for those titles from external developers, said Kundratitz.

"We think that combining all of these aspects leaves us a lot of freedom," he stated.

"With this setup we are on one side able to cooperate with partners in different degrees but also to publish our own titles. With distribution we have an international expertise in every local European market for more than 10 years - we know how to bring a product to the customer."

Looking to the future, he added: "We plan to strengthen our publishing business with our own brands. We have started that already with titles like Risen and *Cursed Mountain*, but will expand these activities in the future.

"Having our own brands allows us to compete as an independent publisher in the games market where the distribution is declining due to the growing online business," he said.

Kundratitz said the fast changing relationships between publishers and developers were forcing many companies used to handling physical distribution of games to rethink their studio relations.

"While in past years it was possible to allow for errors on both sides, today it is absolutely important to stay in budget, in time and within the expected quality," he said.

"With budgets for multi-platform titles growing ever bigger and game development growing ever more complex, a publisher has to keep a very sharp eye if the developers stays within the given and agreed timeframe."

But Kundratitz said views on both sides need to be

acquisition spree

projects, with plans to sign new games made in the UK and Europe

Deep Silver previously found key titles like STALKER and Cursed Mountain to publish – now it wants to sign more UK and European made games

kept in check as developers start thinking more like publishers and publishers become more sensitive to developers' needs.

"For instance during development these days, marketing will have a much bigger influence on the creation of a game to assure its marketability," he said.

"Having a fair relationship with developers is very important to us. Only if both sides have the feeling that this is a mutually beneficial relationship can a quality product be conveyed to the customer."

With the burgeoning online and social gaming markets and increasing consumer access to digital distribution, Dr. Kundratitz also said the firm is looking towards download-only and games with added DLC.

"These developments are nothing to get nervous about. Rather they are a natural development with ever growing broadband capacities available today. DLCs can extend the life span of a product with keeping the interest of customers, media and potential buyers in a game," he said.

"Free or paid DLCs, as Bioware shows with *Mass Effect 2*, can be used to bind buyers to a product for a longer time period. We should face these developments and see how we can use them for our own business. It's necessary to be prepared in time."

In all, Deep Silver wants to work with developers in order to take advantage of the expanding market for casual, online and triple-A video games.

"While in the 90s gaming was limited to a selected few, nowadays everyone can play everywhere, anytime. The appeal and acceptance of games as a leisure activity has grown in the general public," said Kundratitz.

"Be it at home on the desktop PC, through the use of consoles in the living room, on the go through portable consoles or the iPhone our through apps on Facebook - everyone can find their own way of playing games."

www.deepsilver.com

> ***"While in past years it was possible to allow for errors on both sides, today it is absolutely important to stay in budget, in time and of expected quality."***
>
> Dr. Klemens Kundratitz

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22nd May 2010, Fat Sams, Dundee.

www.gameinscotland.com

Scottish Enterprise

DEVELOP DIARY

YOUR COMPLETE GAMES DEVELOPMENT EVENT CALENDAR FOR THE MONTHS AHEAD…

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June 4th to 5th
Utrecht, The Netherlands
www.festivalofgames.nl/site

The Dutch Festival of Games is Europe's most effective business event for studios looking to make a profit from the digital games market.

At the festival, the games industry blends with media and entertainment, big brands and ICT to create solutions from shared issues.

The show attracts decision makers in business, strategy, marketing, finance, game art, design, technology and development.

MAY 2010

GDC CANADA 2010
May 6th to 7th
Vancouver, Canada
www.gdc-canada.com

MONETISING MOBILE
May 26th
BAFTA London
www.mobile-ent.biz

GAME IN SCOTLAND 2010
May 22nd
Dundee, Scotland
www.gameinscotland.com

JUNE 2010

FESTIVAL OF GAMES
June 4th to 5th
Utrecht, The Netherlands
www.festivalofgames.nl/site

E3 2010
June 15th to 17th
Los Angeles, US
www.e3expo.com

WORLD OF LOVE
June 25th
London, UK
www.worldoflove.eventbrite.com

GAME HORIZON 2010
June 29th to 30th
Newcastle, UK
www.gamehorizon.net

JULY 2010

ANIMATION 10 - AWARDS NIGHT
July 9th
Manchester, UK
www.cs.manchester.ac.uk

DEVELOP IN BRIGHTON
July 13th to 15th
Brighton, UK
www.develop-conference.com

DEVELOP AWARDS
July 14th
Brighton, UK
www.develop-online.net

CASUAL CONNECT SEATTLE
July 20th to 22nd
Seattle, US
seattle.casualconnect.org

AUGUST 2010

GAMESCOM 2010
August 18th to 22nd
Cologne, Germany
www.gamescom-cologne.com

OCTOBER 2010

CASUAL CONNECT KYIV
October 20th to 22nd
Kiev, Ukraine
kyiv.casualconnect.org

NOVEMBER 2010

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL GAME SUMMIT
November 8th to 9th
Montreal, Canada
www.sijm.ca/2010/

DECEMBER 2010

GDC CHINA
December 5th to 7th
Shanghai, China
www.gdcchina.com

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WorldView

Our monthly digest of the past month's global games news…

DEALS

Korean studio **Entwell** has become a licensee of **Emergent's** Gamebryo technology for work on unspecified future titles.

Warner Interactive confirmed that **Day 1 Studios** will be developing forthcoming title *FEAR 3*.

Nintendo has certified **Stonetrip's** ShiVa 3D multi-platform engine to their Wii platform.

Autodesk and **Craft Animations** have announced a software integration deal for their Craft Director Studio and Autodesk's 2011 3ds Max and Softimage software.

Nintendo has renewed a licence with graphics chipset firm **S3 Graphics**, allowing them to use new S3 Texture Compression tech.

Epic Games has licensed **Scaleform GFx** UI tech to be bundled in for free with their Unreal Engine 3.

Emergent game technologies has licensed its Gamebryo engine to South Korea-based studio **SmileGate**.

Konami has revealed the next *Silent Hill* title is currently being developed by Czech studio **Vatra Games**.

FREE CRYENGINE PLANS EMERGE

Global indie outfit Crytek told *Develop* that it wants to release a free engine "that will be up to speed" with the CryEngine 3.

The firm's CEO Cevat Yerli told *Develop* that Crytek already gives away a CryEngine 2 editor to the mod community, but explained that Crytek's expansion strategy stretches way beyond this.

"We have a very vivid community of users and modders and content creators, and usually that's a great way of unlocking the engine," he said.

When asked if the CryEngine 3 was central to this future strategy, Yerli responded:

"Yes, but not as a mod. So far that's what we've been offering for free, and it's easy entry into the production environment. We want to make a standalone free platform that people can run independent of CryEngine that will also be up to speed with it."

It remains unclear what kind of tech and licence deal will emerge from this strategy.

www.crytek.com

USA

IRATA LABS JOINS NEWS CORPS

San Francisco-based three-man indie studio Irata Labs has been aquired by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp media empire.

The surprise acquisition comes as News Corp positions itself to expand operations into games development and publishing - both a telling statement on the viability of the modern game industry and a warning to the publishers of today that media giants are still circling the market.

The LA Times reported that Irata's biggest success to date is social-network themed outing Spymaster, which gained plenty of attention thanks to its use of Twitter. A source close to the deal told the paper:

"These guys have shown they can be mould-breakers with great product. And that's what we care about."

The value of the Irata Labs buyout was not announced by either party.

www.iratalabs.com

SWEDEN/UK

IGNITION STRIKES HANSOFT TOOL DEAL

Swedish management tool company Hansoft has announced a new licensing deal for their tech with international game developer Ignition Entertainment.

Terms of the agreement were not announced by either Hansoft or Ignition, so it remains unclear how long Ignition will be able to make use of Hansoft's project management tools.

Ignition – a UK-headquartered company with offices in LA, Florida, London, Mumbai and Tokyo – said that the company's own international spread made Hansoft an ideal choice in simplifying the dev process.

"With projects spread across different time-zones and territories it was important for us to have a flexible system that was accessible to key personnel from anywhere in the world," said Ignition senior producer Anne-Christine Gasc.

She added: "[Hansoft's] pipelines and workflows functionality allowed us to configure the system further to cover our remaining requirements, and in fact exceed all of them."

www.hansoft.se

USA

EX-INFINITY WARD STAFF JOIN RESPAWN

Almost 20 ex-Infinity Ward employees have joined Zampella and West's Respawn Entertainment - the indie studio formed out of a high-profile legal row with Activision.

Those joining Respawn include lead designer Todd Alderman, lead animators Mark Grisby and John Paul Messerly, lead environmental artist Chris Cherubini, software engineer Rayme C. Vinson, programmer Jon Shirling and lead designer Mackey McCandlish.

News of the Respawn hires comes soon after Activision media manager Dan Amrich said the Infinity Ward staff walkouts were "not over yet".

Speaking from a personal perspective, he said that "more people will probably go too, looking for new situations."

He added: "Maybe they will join Respawn, maybe not."

www.respawn.com

AUSTRALIA

SECTOR 3 AQUIRED BY TRICKSTAR

Australian studio Trickstar Games has acquired developer Sector3, with a plan to expand its offering an harness the potential of the huge casual audience.

Specialising in iPhone, Mac and PC titles, Sector3 was formed in 2007, and is most well known for it's StuntMania series, which Trickstar will help take to console platforms.

"I am very excited to be joining a company that shares my philosophy and vision for casual gaming and I am looking forward to creating great games together," said Seon Rozenblum, founder of Sector3.

www.sector3.com

FRANCE/UK

PAULINA BOZEK LEAVES ATARI

Paulina Bozek, the ex-Sony designer responsible for the Atari *SingStar* series, has now departed from an eighteen-month spell running its London studio.

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WARNER BROS. BUYS MMO DEVS TURBINE

Warner Bros has acquired indie MMO developer Turbine in what is reported to be a $160m deal.

Turbine – the Massachusetts-based studio responsible for *Lord of the Rings Online* and *Dungeons & Dragons Online* – is now a fully owned Warner subsidiary. Turbine CEO Jim Crowley said the acquisition will allow the studio to expand its business globally.

Warner Bros' latest buyout completes the publisher's full ownership of the *Lord of the Rings* game brand – a franchise often tipped to be the likeliest to compete with Blizzard's genre kingpin *World of Warcraft*.

Last year the group purchased J.R.R. Tolkien's original literary *Lord of the Rings* works from EA.

Numbers behind the deal have not been announced, though a purported source close to the matter said the deal will be reaching figures as high as $160 million.

The deal sees Warner's aggressive games industry expansion continue, having recently bought up a majority of properties sold by fallen firm Midway, as well as a majority share in *Batman: Arkham Asylum* studio Rocksteady Games.

www.turbine.com

Phil Harrison and David Gardner have also resigned from their seat on the company's board of directors.

Bozek was hired in 2009 to head up the new online-focused outfit.

It was uncertain how many were working at Atari London Studio when Bozek headed up the group. The studio had released only one project since Bozek stood in as development director.

"We recently launched a Facebook application called Atari Photo Sauce in October," she recently told *Develop*.

"It's a social creative app that lets you decorate photos with funny stickers, accessories and speech bubbles and 'Photo Sauce' your friends."

www.atari.com

UK

TREASURY MINISTER VISITS BLITZ

Treasury Minister Stephen Timms has visited UK stronghold Blitz Games Studios.

Joined by Labour candidate James Plaskitt, Timms met with Blitz Games' founding brothers Philip and Andrew Oliver to discuss the industry's strengths and how it can be aided in the future.

Timms said he enjoyed visiting a "fantastically creative and innovative company first hand."

He went on to say that: "Blitz played a key role in making the case for the tax break announced by the Chancellor in the Budget, and I look forward to seeing the growth of the British video games industry in the course of the years to come."

Both Andrew and Philip Oliver helped lead the charge in the UK's campaign for game development tax breaks, but both stated their belief that there is still more to do.

www.blitzgamesstudios.com

CANADA

SILICON KNIGHTS GRANTED $4M BY GOVERNMENT

Too Human studio Silicon Knights has been granted around $4m from the Canadian government for a new multi-platform title due within five years.

The money is set to create 65 new jobs at the studio immediately.

Canadian newspaper *The Tribune* reported that the grant was announced by Canadian MP Rick Dykstra at the Silcon Knights offices.

"This is going to benefit Silicon Knights in ways that are profound and long-lasting," said company president Denis Dyack.

He added that the title planned from the investment will be built for next-gen consoles, and that he expected other jobs to be created during development.

MP Dykstra said that the Canadian government are providing taxpayer money to a private company as there are no competing businesses to be impacted by the decision.

"Their growth and their success is very important to our community," he said.

www.siliconknights.com

SAY WHAT?!?

"We treat our developers extremely well."

*In the wake of the ongoing Infinity Ward debacle, Activision COO **Thomas Tippl** attempts to defend his company.*

"There is a creative force in Scotland's computer games industry that we must support."

***Alistair Darling** had some more sugar-coated words for developers on his recent visit to Scottish studios*

"Go screw yourself, Apple."

*Little words, huge statement. Adobe's 'platform evangelist' **Lee Brimelow** kicks back against Apple's Flash embargo.*

"There are some people in the games industry that think a tax break might be too narrow, or inappropriate."

*But at the time of writing, Tory video games spokesperson **Ed Vaizey** and his party had yet to offer a decent alternative.*

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS SPONSORED BY Bethesda SOFTWORKS

COMMENT: BUSINESS

The generation game

by **Nick Gibson,** Games Investor Consulting

A number of industry figures have expressed their belief that the games industry will not see another major new generation of consoles.

Their hypothesis is that the future of console hardware lies in steady evolutionary footsteps and increasingly open platforms rather than the large-scale proprietary technological leaps that have periodically punctuated the last 30 years. They often argue that the investment required by Microsoft and Sony in competing at the cutting edge is simply too onerous and no longer economically viable.

They also often highlight the rapid rise of server-based gaming and its lower client-side hardware requirements. Should such a change take place, it would have a truly profound impact on the games industry. Developers would be forced to reappraise their approach to content, tools and middleware development. Publishers' financials – and share prices – would no longer be slaves to cyclicality. Consumers' buying patterns would be profoundly altered. Given that console software sales represent over $25 billion per annum, there is much at stake. But how likely is this game-changing prediction to take place?

Clearly, only the console manufacturers and their close industry confidantes know at this stage. However, I believe that we will see a major new generation of hardware launched in the next two-to-four years and that proprietary consoles will still be on sale in ten, even 15 year's time. Here's why.

SELF CONTROL

Console manufacturers invest in proprietary hardware for one overriding reason: control. Having complete technical and legal control over their own platforms allows them to justify levying fees for every disc manufactured and unit distributed digitally. These fees typically subsidise lower hardware retail prices, driving demand for both hardware and software.

They are acceptable to publishers as a result and make the console manufacturing business model viable. It is difficult therefore to envisage Nintendo, Sony or Microsoft relinquishing control over their own hardware, and easy to see continued investment in proprietary technology and closed platforms to maintain their fee justification.

While Nintendo has opened up the casual console games market, the bedrock of both Sony and Microsoft's strategy remains the hardcore gamer, a species that is fewer in number but considerably more valuable per player. These gamers' purchasing decisions are driven by various factors, but they are unique in expecting continual improvements in game technology sophistication. For Sony or Microsoft to drop out of the technology arms race that feeds this consumer demand would be to retreat from the hardcore market.

This would represent a huge strategic risk for the exiting company and give the survivor a monopolistic market dominance. Microsoft and Sony are tied together in this arms race, whether they like it or not.

But could console manufacturers simply move to smaller, iterative but still proprietary and cutting-edge hardware releases every one to two years rather than $2 to $3 billion blown on a single platform every four to six years? Superficial features and interface innovations have been used for generations to extend platform longevity but these are not really console iterations; they do not fundamentally improve the specification and performance of the underlying platforms. As Sega found with the Mega CD, the idea of iterating platforms gradually is flawed in three critical ways: player fragmentation, development resistance and consumer confusion.

> ***"The bedrock of Sony and Microsoft's strategy remains the hardcore gamer, a species that is fewer in number but considerably more valuable per player."***

IRRITATING ITERATIONS

While the installed base of consoles only ever increases, the active player base follows a parabolic growth curve which, after many years and at its peak, can reach up to 50-to-60 million players for a single console (c.50 per cent of PS2's installed base). Games publishers tend to experience their greatest individual and collective software sales during this period usually recording their best financial results too. In contrast, they often go into loss during the platform transition years when the active user bases bottom out.

Above: Iterating platforms gradually is flawed, as Sega found out with its Mega CD

Developers make significant up-front investments with the advent of a new platform to build best-of-breed technology and amortise this cost over as many titles and for as long as possible. Moving to iterative hardware could severely disrupt this – developers would have to make those up-front investments on a more regular basis and be less able to get to grips with the new technology.

They would end up having to create multiple versions of the same game and would likely end up prioritising the lowest common denominator, the original platform, as it will have the largest installed base. This would contribute to the inevitable player confusion and annoyance when faced with multiple hardware requirements to access different functionality within the same game as well as the marketing challenge of highlighting what those requirements are.

The console hardware market is undoubtedly undergoing substantial change: the demography of gaming has broadened hugely, Microsoft and Nintendo aim to extend their current platforms' cycles and digital distribution is becoming increasingly prevalent. However, I do not believe that any of these will alter the continued use of the traditional model of periodic major new platform launches. And for that, games developers and publishers should be very grateful.

Nick Gibson is a director at Games Investor Consulting, providing research, strategy consulting and corporate finance services to the games, media and finance industries.
www.gamesinvestor.com

COMMENT: DESIGN

Word Play

by Billy Thomson, Ruffian Games

What would you say if I offered you a game that had squads of troops engaged in constant battle, fighting to dominate entire islands and hidden fortresses? Set in a land in constant turmoil where monolithic structures rise and fall, and ancient monuments loom over battlegrounds with imposing menace.

A game where only the sharpest reflexes, quickest minds and strategically adept can hope to survive intact. A game with a bevy of carefully crafted and wickedly sharp opponents who constantly test your abilities to attack, parry and defend. Where captured prisoners are forced to fight for you and where only those who truly master the cornering of opponents or setting cleverly baited traps can hope to wipe-out all comers and assume control.

I'd expect that you would be intrigued and instantly want to try the game out, I know I did when I was offered the opportunity myself.

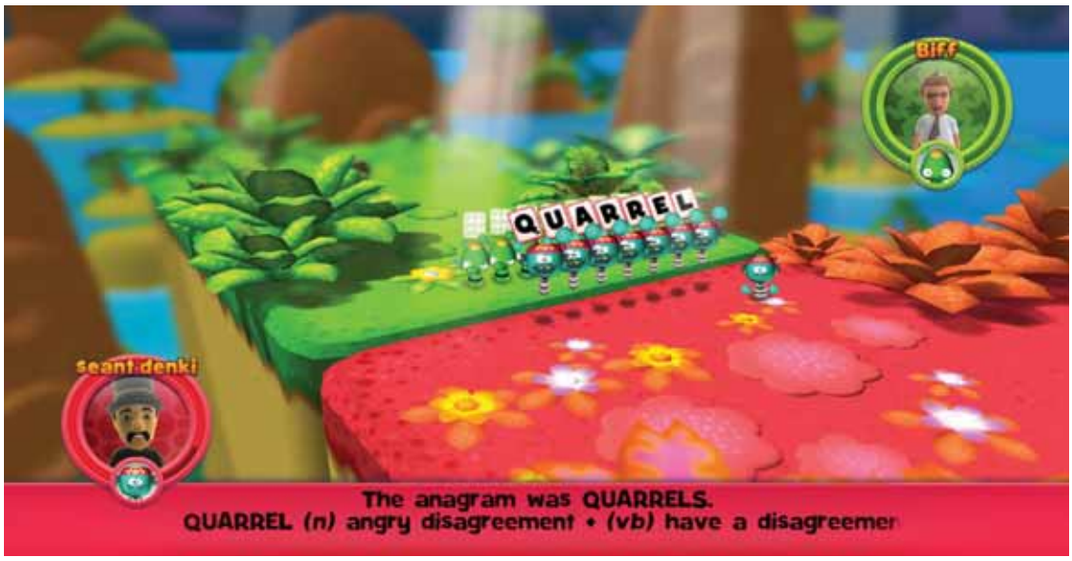
FOR ARGUMENT'S SAKE

After reading that high-level summary of the game, most people would expect some form of action based FPS game, but the fact is this game is more akin to a combination of *Hangman*, *Scrabble* and *Risk*. There are no weapons, vehicles or alien enemy forces in this game, or any need for ninja skills. This game is all about using the old noggin to beat your challenger, which is a refreshing change from the endless list of sports and FPS titles that are saturating the charts.

Denki, a local, independent Dundee based game developer, has created this fantastic little word game named *Quarrel*.

As I mentioned *Quarrel* is, quite succinctly, 'war with words' and playing it is simplicity itself. There are just three key steps to playing which anyone can quickly grasp. Step one – choose one of your squads. Step two – pick a neighbour to fight. Step three – make the best word fastest. Making a higher scoring word than your opponent triggers a frantic battle where their lands are taken from them, their troops crushed and even prisoners can be captured. Engage in frequent conflicts to improve your word-making options, tactical and strategic skills and take on cleverer and more devious opponents.

The game is complete and it's great fun to play. It's a really well structured, tight design with a beautiful, playful art style and it's fiendishly addictive. On top of all that, it also has the potential to help kids learn genuinely useful problem solving and language skills that will benefit them in everyday life. Something that I would imagine none of the current Top Ten selling games can boast right now.



Denki's new word game Quarrel is works on many levels – but why is it struggling to find a publisher?

> ***"I think having games like Quarrel – to mix in with the mindless fun we have in the countless number of shooters, sports, fighting and driving – is a welcome addition."***

CROSS WORDS

You would think publishers are climbing over the top of each other to sign this game, yet incredibly it hasn't been snapped up by any of the top publishers in the industry. Apparently, the general publisher opinion is 'gamers don't play word games'. So, from the publisher point of view there is no viable market for the game, putting any money behind this already complete and well-polished game would be too high risk. I'd be able to accept a certain amount of scepticism from people who hadn't played the game, but not from anyone in the industry who had sat down and played a few rounds. It's such a simple yet compelling concept, and you always want another go whether you win or lose the last round, which is a difficult balance to strike in game design.

I've asked every developer and gamer I know about this game and they all believe that there must be a market for it, primarily because they'd all buy it themselves. I can see it doing well as a fun teaching aid in primary schools because it manages to do that incredibly difficult job of educating, without you feeling like you're being patronised. Something I'd imagine teachers across the country look upon as the Holy Grail of education.

Maybe I'm getting too old and responsible, but I think having games like *Quarrel*, to mix in with the mindless fun we have in the countless number of shooters, sports, platformers, fighting and driving games that are out there, is a welcome addition. Isn't gaming all about choice and variation? I believe this game has incredible potential on Xbox Live, PSN, Nintendo's Virtual Console, Facebook, iPhone and PC – especially for school classrooms. Hopefully I'm not alone in that respect.

Visit www.denki.co.uk/quarrel to get more information on the game and give your support.

Billy Thomson is the creative director of newly-formed developer Ruffian Games. Billy has over 13 years experience of designing video games, including design roles on *Grand Theft Auto* and *GTA2*, before working as lead designer on Realtime Worlds' celebrated *Crackdown*.
www.ruffiangames.com

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS SPONSORED BY Bethesda SOFTWORKS

COMMENT: INDUSTRY

How 'Casual' Are You?

by David Braben

I hate the term 'casual gamer'. At Frontier we have made a number of games that appeal to a broad audience, including the so-called 'casual' gamer, like the *Roller Coaster Tycoon* games, *Thrillville* games, *Dog's Life* and *Wallace and Gromit* games (we view *LostWinds* as primarily a core-gamer game, by-the-way). With each of these games we have conducted audience studies both in our own right, and with publishers, as well as the anecdotal feel we all have anyway as gamers. Over time this gives a good impression of what people tend to like and dislike, and it's a subtle, complex mix.

I regularly answer interview questions, both face-to-face, over the phone and by email, and a very common question that has come up time and time again in relation to these games is: 'So, how far did you have to dumb things down to appeal to the casual gamer?' Each time I hear it, my heart sinks. The unspoken but clearly felt snobbery towards these players underlying this is a big problem. I sometimes think some people in our industry have this private image of the casual gamer as an inbred potato-faced, straw-chewing idiot, with a fat wallet. It really isn't like that.

In our experience, making games accessible to a broad audience involves just as much, if not more, development effort and focus testing as a 'core-gamer' game. Quality has a universal appeal, no matter what demographic your player may – or may not – fit into.

GOLDEN ERA

Cast your mind back to ye olden times of 1997, which feels like a blink of an eye ago for some of us, and the release of *Goldeneye* on the Nintendo 64. I remember many gamers complaining about how hard the controls were to come to terms with. Thankfully, they eventually did so and all this is now forgotten, and it spawned perhaps the most successful genre in our industry, the console FPS. There are still purists that think mouse and twenty hard-to-remember keyboard buttons are the 'true' FPSs, but that is a whole separate rant which just reinforces my point.

The previous year, other gamers complained about the number of buttons used in *Mario 64* with its move to 3D. This, and the issues with *Goldeneye*, is no different to what a typical casual gamer feels when they try to play *Modern Warfare 2*, especially when they get whupped instantly by pixel-perfect expert players, while they are busy trying to work out how to stop the camera looking down at their feet. In this sphere, they are merely beginners. We core-gamers have had a gradual build up over a long sequence of FPSs since *Goldeneye*, each slightly more complex and unforgiving than the last. If our 1997 selves were magically brought forward today with just the experience we had then, we would probably be considered as casual gamers too, by today's standards.

Those new to gaming now, attracted by the simple approachability of Wii, iPhone, iPad, and hopefully in the near future Sony's Move and Microsoft's Natal, have not spent all their waking moments pouring over games reviews or the latest in gaming hardware. They have been doing other things. This doesn't mean we should treat them like idiots, but should draw them in by providing interesting, accessible experiences that are something more than shallow party games.

> ***"We're in an industry that's never stopped changing – we should embrace this and push these new technologies to deliver great new experiences for all our audiences."***

NATAL GAZING

Great levellers like *Heavy Rain*, (in that core-gamer skills and twitch response are not needed), are an interesting move in this direction, as it is focussing more on the experience and choices of the player than their ability, and yet is not patronising them with a primary-colours-based simplistic interface.

We have seen new players come to the Wii in droves, but there has sadly been a significant exodus since, as I believe we have failed to follow up with enough varied experiences to hold the interest of those players, without overwhelming them with complex controls that make them feel foolish. Clearly many will have bought the machine through fashion, and may still wheel it out occasionally at parties, but no longer buy any games for it. It may be too late for those people of the Wii generation – but let's not underestimate those who come to our industry through Natal or Move. These people are not afraid of technology – they love it and will buy it in droves – they are afraid of feeling, or being made to look stupid. It is our job to make them look and feel clever, to feel involved, to draw them in.

'Casual' is a term often used by the games industry – but its over-use means we end up patronising our growing audience

I have even overheard people say 'the market for casual games is dead'. It is not. The market for some of the cheap rubbish labelled as 'casual' games, aiming for the fictitious straw-chewer may well be dead, but the market for new experiences is as alive as ever. There is a danger that as developers we will look inward as an industry, studying our collective navels. Microsoft and Sony have staked a great deal on their forthcoming technologies, which together present a scale of opportunity for innovation this industry has hardly seen before. We are in an industry that has never stopped changing – we should embrace this and push these exciting new technologies to deliver great new experiences for all our audiences.

David Braben is the founder of Cambridge-based Frontier Developments. Best known as the co-creator of *Elite*, Braben has contributed to, designed or overseen a number of other projects including *Frontier: Elite II*, *Dog's Life*, *Thrillville* and *LostWinds*. Frontier is currently developing his next title, *The Outsider*. He is also closely involved with Skillset.
www.frontier.co.uk

COMMENT: BUSINESS

Bringing Your Games to XBLA

by Ben Board, Microsoft

The Xbox 360 is more than a games machine. Sure, it's a Sky TV player, a movies marketplace, a social networking client, a DVD player and all that – but above all, it's a platform. What does that mean?

A platform is much more than just a box of electronics, more than a set of APIs, certification requirements, legal policies, brands and logos. Underneath, a platform is like an ecosystem. It's an environment that allows many different agencies to work together in a way that is, all being well, virtuously circular, supporting and benefiting everyone. A platform's games are its flowers: alluring shapes and colours topping long stems of investment, which can be enjoyed in their own right while providing the pollen for new growth. Developers, as individuals learning to create ever-better experiences, are agents within as well as fruits of the system. Careers are built on platforms, too.

A platform is also a sort of collaboration. We, the platform provider, promise to build, maintain, develop and protect its capabilities so that you, the content creator, can use it to build your products, observing a few ground rules, and we share the spoils. This model works really well, especially for Xbox, whose ecosystem is generally very successful for the developers, publishers and retailers who inhabit it.

PLATFORM GAMES

As a platform within a platform, Xbox Live Arcade (XBLA) is arguably the most successful of the three console digital games channels; a cornerstone of the Xbox experience, with an ecosystem of its own that has matured over the years into a serious way to make profitable video games, particularly for small to mid-sized developers. These developers often ask our advice for getting their game onto XBLA. There are essentially two routes. Let me summarise them here.

One is to find a third-party publisher to sponsor your development. This is a pitch process much like any other, involving the usual routine of research, approaches, and, if things start to gain momentum, meetings and negotiations, all preceded by bags of business and design planning and the production of that killer demo to blow away the publisher. The key to finding a deal this way is to understand publishers' needs – who is actively engaged with XBLA, which titles do they already publish, and what are they looking to sign?

The other is to approach Microsoft Game Studios (MGS), the first-party publisher on Xbox. MGS has published more XBLA titles than any other publisher – around half of the hundreds of games available to the service – so if you're a dev looking to place your game, or with more questions about that process, you should contact them at arcade@microsoft.com. (It's worth noting that we DAMs don't work for MGS and so aren't the people to try to pitch your game to, although this does happen – and we're really happy to offer our opinion, or even put in a good word if we see something we think is great, if we're visiting you on other business.)

> ***"XBLA is the most successful of the three console digital games channels; an ecosystem of its own that's matured over the years into a serious way to make profitable video games."***

Whether you pursue the first or third-party route, it's important to understand what characterises an XBLA title. In my opinion the quality and production values on the service have been rising steadily in recent years, and while XBLA titles are usually smaller and shorter you'd do well to aim for retail Xbox title levels of quality in graphics and gameplay. Look at the big successes for inspiration. Last year alone *Trials HD, Splosion Man* (both built by small teams), *Battlefield* and *Shadow Complex* all had huge success. As with any other marketplace, if you're selling the brightest trinkets, you'll attract most of the attention.

INDEPENDENT THINKING

I'll close by mentioning two more routes to market that we provide to games developers. First is the Xbox Live Indie Games channel, previously known as Community Games, or XNA Games. Using Windows software that we provide, you can code up your games in C#, test them on the PC, then compile the same code for Xbox and deploy it across your home network to your retail console – no dev kit required. Better still you can then submit it to the channel and charge actual cash for it, and people are doing so, and making real money on Xbox.

Action platform video game Splosion Man brought huge success last year for Twisted Pixel Games

Xbox is unique among the home consoles in offering that capability. Personally, I think that's pretty damn awesome. If only I had more time... (and talent).

The second route is *Windows Phone 7 Series*, shipping at the end of the year. A bit of Bing sleuthing will lead you to the recently-released preview SDK that enables you to write games, also in C#, for the phone – at least, for the included emulator, until the handsets appear. Windows Phone will be the latest Microsoft gaming ecosystem: a new platform on which developers and publishers can grow their business.

Ben Board is European developer account manager at Microsoft, supporting all studios working on games for Xbox and Games for Windows platforms. He previously worked as a programmer and producer at the likes of Bullfrog, EA and Lionhead.

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Search for a Star

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develop

Aardvark Swift would like to thank all the universities and graduates that have taken part in Search for a Star. Good luck to the 5 finalists! We look forward to presenting the winner with your 'Develop Award' on July 14th!

Search for a Star is a nationwide competition run in conjunction with Relentless Software (thanks for all your help guys!). It will highlight the UK's most promising video games developers and also help bridge the current gap between the needs of developers and UK games degree courses.

For full information please visit www.aswift.com/searchforastar

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Aardvark Swift

BETA

DEVELOPMENT FEATURES, INTERVIEWS, ESSAYS & MORE

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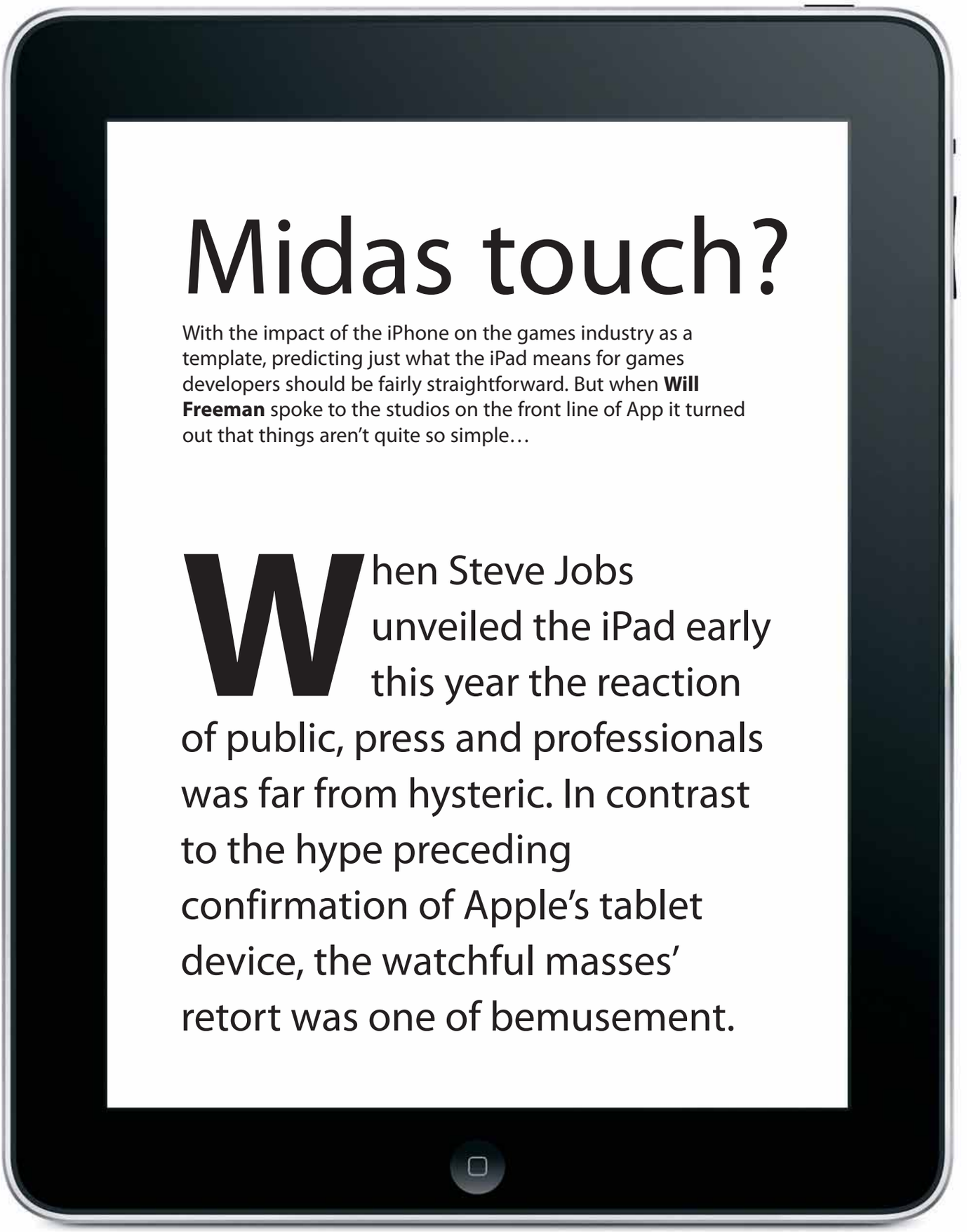
Smart Casual

Is the iPad set to shake up the very ecosystem of app development, or just make things difficult? Leading iPhone studios tell all, p18



Midas touch?

With the impact of the iPhone on the games industry as a template, predicting just what the iPad means for games developers should be fairly straightforward. But when **Will Freeman** spoke to the studios on the front line of App it turned out that things aren't quite so simple…

When Steve Jobs unveiled the iPad early this year the reaction of public, press and professionals was far from hysteric. In contrast to the hype preceding confirmation of Apple's tablet device, the watchful masses' retort was one of bemusement.

Equally easy to dismiss as an outsized iPad Touch, misguided netbook or audacious e-reader, the iPad continues to divide opinion. But with Apple's industry-shattering reputation, it would be unwise not to take a close look at the potential of the iPad, and weigh up the pros and cons of the headline-grabbing platform.

Sharing many of the same guts as the iPhone, and built around a near identical user interface, it's easy to dismiss the iPad as little more than a system-revision. However when you speaking to the most renowned app developers, it's clear that a larger screen is just the start of a bigger picture.

SIZE MATTERS

"The iPad is definitely a platform in its own right," insists Rob Murray, CEO of *Flight Control* creator Firemint. "Like going from TV to cinema, it's a platform where size matters. Once you've had an iPad for a while, it's hard not to think of an iPod touch as a smaller iPad that makes up for the limitations of a small screen size with the convenience of fitting into your jeans pocket."

Murray isn't alone in thinking that the iPad's increased size is a catalyst for substantial changes to both user behaviour and game design.

"I definitely think it is a distinct new device," affirms Eros Resmini, VP of marketing at Aurora Feint, which offers multiplayer and social backend for iPhone games. "I see the iPad as being in between a mobile device and a laptop. I've heard the people use the term 'casual computing' to describe the kind of usage the iPad inspires.

"If you think of an iPhone, it's more of a 'lean-in' experience', in that you have to get really close to your device to start using it. I find that the iPad is more of a 'lean-back' experience. Surfing and using the device feels very light, and I think that bodes very well for game developers, and people that have content more suited to that lean-back scenario."

Resmini's observation offers an interesting proposition, suggesting that the new form of the iPad effects not just interface design, but also encourages developers to consider traditional ergonomic concerns about physical interaction.

There's a general consensus that a larger device will encourage longer play sessions and more time spent with the device in the home, as Todd Northcutt, VP, GameSpy Technology clarifies: "The form factor, the screen size, technical capabilities and even the environment where the device will be mostly used are radically different than the iPhone.

"What makes a great game for my phone, which I might play in five minute increments standing in a grocery line, will likely not be the same great experience on the iPad, sitting on my comfy sofa when I have an hour to spend playing."

Another casual industry stalwart – this time from the publishing sector – who eager to highlight the wider change the device's outsized dimensions will inspire, is Intenium project manager Florian Groß. He warns that developers are going to need to start to think differently about the way they design games: "People will use it at home and not on the go. For games that implies that a one minute gameplay experience might not be enough for iPad games."

There's certainly no shortage of studios and bedroom coders keen to embrace the iPad, but even with such a vast collective skill base, the challenges will be myriad.

Aurora Feint works with a quite staggering 17,000 developers, positioning Resmini perfectly to tap into the murmur of concern masked by the veil of enthusiasm.

"What I hear in the crowd is that just really getting used to the new form factor is the biggest challenge," reveals Resmini.

"The larger screen can offer a lot of opportunities to add content to games, but it also presents challenges in terms of titles that use accelerometers, and in terms of where to place the HUD. Some of the key components that needed to be crammed into the iPhone now have a lot of options. Sometimes those options can be a bit daunting."

DOWN TO BUSINESS

An impressive number of iPad games were available at the tablet's US launch, and many were immediately praised for harnessing the unique potential of the platform.

Still, many more missed out on the opportunity, overcompensating for the extra screen space with cluttered UIs, or simply upscaling their titles. All of which did little to disprove the idea that iPad is little more than a 'king-sized' iPhone.

> ***"Producing iPad games in the same manner as on the iPhone will be difficult – especially if the higher price for iPad apps we've seen so far remain the norm."***
>
> Todd Northcutt, GameSpy

"It's great to have lots of extra screen real-estate, but all of those extra pixels have to be used properly," advises Michel Kripalani, former Autodesk games boss and now founder of app studio Oceanhouse Media.

"You can't just take an existing iPhone experience, up-res the graphics and expect it to look good. The best iPad apps are the ones that are designed for that size screen from day one."

Kripalani greets the iPad's arrival with a breed of cautious optimism not uncommon among his peers, and is quick to highlight the fact that's Apple's latest piece of kit provides the largest multi-touch surface most studios will ever have worked with. That means a period defined by what the Oceanhouse president refers to as 'unlocking new gameplay paradigms'; a process that most agree will take some time. Genres need reinventing, UI design may have to return to basics and, perhaps more significantly, studios may need to restructure.

"The mechanics and underlying technology may be the same, but I think that the craft of making iPad games is different and will be a new challenge," says GameSpy's Northcutt, who proposes that Apple's latest must-have tech could shake up app development ecosystem before it's even settled in the wake of the iPhone.

"Does that mean more difficult? Probably. I don't think that the kinds of stories we heard on the iPhone, with short development cycles and small teams will be repeated on the iPad for this very reason. I believe people are going to expect much more from their iPad games and doing that in the same manner as on the iPhone will be difficult – especially if the higher price points for iPad apps we've seen thus far remain the case."

If Northcutt is correct, then the industry must brace itself for a leap in consumer expectation brought on by the increasingly ubiquitous iPad screen.

Miles Jacobson, the man at the driving seat of *Football Manager*'s recent success on iPhone, and Sports Interactive's studio director, also subscribes to the view that a potential shift in user expectation could be on its way.

In fact Jacobson, who has never shied away from first hand communication with *Football Manager*'s immense swathe of fans, has picked up on what could create something of a problem for the iPhone titles.

"It's a giant iPod that happens to have some features available that make it its own platform, particularly in the GUI side of things," states the SI boss.

"What it isn't is a home computer, and from the comments that I'm getting at the moment on Twitter and our forums, people don't seem to understand yet that it's unlikely they'll see full blown PC and Mac games on the device."

A BLOCK OFF THE OLD CHIP

Peel away the tactile casing that has already enamoured early American adopters, and the iPad boasts some impressive credentials (*see 'Under the Hood'*). There's a custom-designed 1GHz Apple A4 processing chip keeping things running, and thanks a substantially faster CPU, the iPad does a great deal to leave its smaller predecessor in a cloud of dust.

Yet despite some box-ticking specs, life isn't necessarily set to get any developers migrating from iPhone to iPad.

"Developing for the platform is certainly easier than it was for the iPhone from a creative perspective, because the extra screen space gives you more freedom," says Brian Greenstone, who serves as CEO for Pangea Software – the longest continually operating game developer for Apple platforms. With over 22 years of toiling with Apple SDKs, and a number of iPhone hits like *Cro-Mag Rally* under its belt, Pangea knows Apple CEO Jobs' platforms better than most

"The main issue now for a lot of developers is trying to figure out a single code base for an app that has to run on both the iPhone and the iPad, because obviously there are some major differences," says Greenstone, who isn't afraid to share some of his more troubling experiences with the iPhone.

According to the Pangea veteran, one of the biggest hurdles new iPad developers must prepare for is the issue of fill rate on the 3D chip.

Cut through the hype and it's clear iPad isn't akin to a laptop – or the other extreme, a giant iPhone. It's something completely different. And that's both a good and bad thing for developers

Above from left: Developers cautious but optimistic about iPad. Miles Jacobson (Sports Interactive); Baudouin Corman (Gameloft); Rob (Firemint); Patrick Wylie (Big Fish); and Andrew Stein (PopCap)

"The 3D chip on the iPad appears to be the same chip as the one in the iPhone. It's a mobile chip, and being a mobile chip it's not really designed for such a high resolution screen," reveals Greenstone.

"That means it's a little bit fill rate limited – if you've got a lot of overlapping 3D models and fog or a complex environment like a lot of games, it brings the iPad to its knees.

"The processor is super-fast, but the graphics chip can get bottlenecked, and that has been the challenge."

Fortunately, there's a solution if the 3D chip isn't quite delivering the goods.

According to Greenstone, for some of his games, a small drop of a graphics resolution slider countered by a 40 per cent upscaling on the hardware's behalf means a near unperceivable change that lets the iPad get back on its feet.

HIDE AND SEEK

Of course, creating apps isn't just a matter of interactive design; it's also about selling product, and on the iPhone every developer knows that means discoverability. The arrival of the iPad App Store could have been Apple's opportunity to implement a grand new design and rid its i-devices of the curse of the chart-based searching. But for now at least that doesn't seem the to be part of the plan.

> ***"The 3D chip appears to be the same as the one in the iPhone. It's a mobile chip, and being so it's not really designed for such a high resolution screen."***
>
> Brian Greenstone, Pangea

It may even be that there's little Apple can or has to do about the fact users have to wade through the thousands of apps out there, says Gameloft's vice president of publishing for the America's Baudouin Corman: "Those issues exist with any open marketplace. I don't think it's unique to the App Store. With more than 10m paid downloads, we've been very successful in terms of our marketing

UNDER THE BONNET

Height: 9.56 inches (242.8 mm)
Width: 7.47 inches (189.7 mm)
Thickness: 0.5 inch (13.4 mm)
Weight: Wi-Fi model: 1.5 pounds (0.68 kg)
Wi-Fi + 3G model: 1.6 pounds (0.73 kg)

DISPLAY
- 9.7-inch (diagonal) LED-backlit glossy widescreen Multi-Touch display with IPS technology
- 1024-by-768-pixel resolution at 132 pixels per inch (ppi)
- Fingerprint-resistant oleophobic coating
- Support for display of multiple languages and characters simultaneously

WIRELESS AND CELLULAR
Wi-Fi model
- Wi-Fi (802.11a/b/g/n)
- Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR technology

Wi-Fi + 3G model
- UMTS/HSDPA (850, 1900, 2100 MHz)
- GSM/EDGE (850, 900, 1800, 1900 MHz)
- Data only2
- Wi-Fi (802.11a/b/g/n)
- Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR technology

CAPACITY
- 16GB, 32GB, or 64GB flash drive

PROCESSOR
- 1GHz Apple A4 custom-designed, high-performance, low-power system-on-a-chip

SENSORS
- Accelerometer
- Ambient light sensor

INPUT AND OUTPUT
- Dock connector port
- 3.5-mm stereo headphone jack
- Built-in speaker
- Microphone
- Micro-SIM card tray (Wi-Fi + 3G model only)

and delivering high quality titles to consumers, so we are not too concerned with it.

"We are looking forward to this continued success with the iPad. We'll continue to focus on integrating our marketing strategies with social networking – YouTube, Facebook, Twitter – to get our games out there."

Corman's optimism isn't isolated, and another giant of the casual sector is equally upbeat about the challenge of discoverability. Perhaps it's experience, or possibly influence, but PopCap Games seems confident that quality product can secure exposure on merit alone.

"As more and more apps launch for the iPad, we do expect the general challenges of discoverability and price erosion to increase," confesses Andrew Stein, director of mobile business development at PopCap.

"However, we have found that high quality content does bubble up to the top and there are more and more websites and other sources of information dedicated to helping iPad and iPhone or iPod touch users find the best games and other apps. So discoverability isn't totally dependent on placement in the App Store – although, of course, that does still play a huge role."

Developers accept that poor discoverability is set to continue on the iPad, but the language is more commonly about workable solutions rather than the issue itself.

"There are all kinds of things you can do for very limited budgets though, so as long as people don't treat the platform in the same way as they would a triple-A boxed product, but more like an XBLA or PSN game, they should be OK," says Sports Interactive's Jacobson

> ***"We have found that high quality content does bubble up to the top and there are more and more websites dedicated to helping users find the best games."***
>
> Andrew Stein, PopCap

"As with any platform, if the app that you are releasing on it is good quality, and good value for money, it should get noticed as long as you PR it in the right way. But as with many great iPod games, you need to work out how to get noticed."

CONTENT WAR

Unfortunately, the obstacles thrown up by the iPad don't end with studios forming a hard skin to the abrasion of discoverability. Given tha the Apple tablet makes it easier to watch movies, read books and comics and also browse online, games makers are going to have to face even more competition from those publishing non-gaming content for the platform than ever.

"Aside from the challenges of designing for a larger screen developers are going to be faced with more competition from within the platform," warns Arkadium's game production director Jeremy Mayes.

"Early polls seemed to indicate that buyers were less interested in gaming on iPad than then they are on iPhone."

There's little disputing that the iPad presents a significant challenge for even the most seasoned game developers, and with new audiences from demographics like the 'grey gamer' set to be welcomed in by the friendly nature of the big screen, the pitfalls and perks of diversity are sure to be seriously amplified.

"[The challenge is] to make more engaging and more mass market titles," says Mayes. "The iPad will unlock a more mass market audience and will take gaming in new directions and open up gaming to new audiences."

There is one thorn in the iPad's side, however, that may make getting familiar with the format a little less pressure for developers. By lacking phone functionality, Apple's tablet is without one of the key selling point of the iPhone, and for that reason, the speculation is that iPad's growth may be faltering at first.

"The iPad's lack of cell phone capabilities might make its growth slower than iPhone, but after using it while at home and on the road for the last couple of weeks, I see the huge potential, so sales could be boosted when the iPad goes from being 'great to have' to 'need to have,'" suggest Patrick Wylie, VP of of Big Fish Games.

ON BAD TERMS

AS ANALYSIS OF APPLE'S controversial new terms of service for the iPhone OS 4.0 continues, it's becoming apparent that the firm seems to be tightening its grip on the way games are developed for the platform.

To recap: Apple is proposing that all iPhone and iPad applications must be 'originally written' in C/C++/Objective-C, which would seem to suggest Apple CEO Steve Jobs and his team are eager to implement an ecosystem that encourages native code and the Cocoa Touch API as the sole platform for app development.

This model sounds like bad news for the high-profile 'meta-platforms' – notably Adobe's Flash-to-iPhone compiler. And alternative App development platforms that run above Cocoa Touch such as .Net through MonoTouch look set for a tough time.

Jobs himself has apparently already voiced his opinions on the advantages of minimalising the role of 'intermediate' platforms in an email conversation published by *Mashable*. Jobs replied to an email by Tao Effect developer Greg Slepak that claimed "SDK TOS are growing on [the iPhone products] like an invisible cancer".

"From a developer's point of view, you're limiting creativity itself," suggested Slepak, to which Jobs replied: "We've been there before, and intermediate layers between the platform and the developer ultimately produces sub-standard apps and hinders the progress of the platform."

The backlash against Apple has already begun, and Adobe's 'platform evangelist' Lee Brimelow used his blog to claim Apple is implementing "tyrannical control over developers and more importantly, wanting to use developers as pawns in their crusade against Adobe".

"The fact that Apple would make such a hostile and despicable move like this clearly shows the difference between our two companies," wrote Brimelow.

"All we want is to provide creative professionals an avenue to deploy their work to as many devices as possible. We are not looking to kill anything or anyone."

Apple's 4.0 OS, which will introduce an Xbox Live-style social network and in-app advertising system, has actually been received with some warmth by a number of developers, who left supportive comments for the forthcoming upgrade over on *Develop*'s sister website *CasualGaming.biz*. The sentiment is that opening the doors to the likes of Flash would "simply flood the App Store with a bunch of crap".

Elsewhere, on it's own blog, Unity has responded to suggestions that its Unity3D platform may be one of many caught in the crossfire of Apple's clampdown.

"We haven't heard anything from Apple about this affecting us," said Unity's CEO David Helgason.

"We believe that with hundreds of titles (or probably over a thousand by now), including a significant proportion of the best-selling ones, we're adding so much value to the iPhone ecosystem that Apple can't possibly want to shut that down.

"Our current best guess is that we'll be fine. But it would obviously be irresponsible to guarantee that. What I can guarantee is that we'll continue to do everything in our power to make this work, and that we will be here to inform you when we know more – as soon as we know more."

TRIPLE WORD SCORE

Considering the collective views of some of the world's most incisive touchscreen App developers, it's easy to dwell on the difficulties the iPad presents. But it is those very complications which highlight the iPad as a new platform. From Firemint to Big Fish, the language being spoken is of teething problems; which iin itself is a sign typical of a new era in game design.

The last word goes to Arkadium's Mayes, who highlights perhaps the most significant change the iPad can brings about. It's a direction that could be seen as a step backward, but hints at a revolution given the potency of online gameplay.

"In my opinion, the biggest opportunity iPad brings to game developers is getting people playing games together again. I'm not talking about synchronous or asynchronous multiplayer games, I'm talking about people playing games together in the same room. The kind of 'social games' that were played long before Facebook existed. It wasn't a coincidence that there were a slew of board game-like apps at launch – the device is perfect as a table top game board. Two players can play *Flight Control* HD across from each other on the same device.

"It makes social gaming fun again."

'Traditional' experiences like this may not be the key to iPad's success – no matter how impressive the press shot is

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Jón Hördal Jónasson
Chief Operating Officer, CCP Games

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SITEL

Bright **stars**

The Develop conference is just two months away – and we've detailed the key sessions. Check www.developconference.com for a full listing…

KEYNOTES

GAMIFICATION: HOW GAMES ARE EVERYWHERE

David Helgason, Unity

Drawing on Unity's rapid rise to prominence to analyse how games are leading the charge on mobile, web, TV and invading social networking – and How highly skilled, innovative studios can thrive beyond the boundaries of traditional development.

TRADITIONAL GAMES BREAKING INTO SOCIAL NETWORKS

Louis Castle, Instant Action

Louis has recently been attempting to free the games industry from the shackles of bricks and mortar and democratizing music games in the process. In this keynote talk he will be sharing his experiences.

TIM SCHAFER KEYNOTE

Tim Schafer, Double Fine

The exact details of the keynote are not yet known, but Schafer committed to the conference as we went to press. The much-loved designer is the president of Double Fine Productions, creator of *Psychonauts* and *Brütal Legend*. Prior to Double Fine, he was a project leader at LucasArts.

BIOWARE KEYNOTE

Ray Muzyka and Greg Zeschuk, BioWare

The BioWare founders will also present a keynote. The pair oversee a studio network, founded in 1995, respected for story-driven adventures – recent releases include *Mass Effect* and *Dragon Age*. BioWare's Austin team is working on *Star Wars: The Old Republic*.

DEVELOP CONFERENCE & EXPO

WHEN:
July 14th to 16th

WHERE:
Brighton Metropole Hotel, UK

www.developconference.com

BUSINESS

BROADCASTING THEIR INTENTIONS: THE BBC, CHANNEL 4, AND GAMES

Alice Taylor, Channel 4 & Dave Anderson, BBC

How broadcasters hope to tap into the game space, how they see the market shaping up, and what their interest could mean for developers and publishers.

BURN ZOMBIE BURN. MARKETING, SALES AND MAKING MONEY

James Brooksby, doublesix

The history of the hit game *Burn Zombie Burn*. How it made it to PSN exclusivity then move on to discussing the marketing that took *Burn Zombie Burn* to sell over 140,000 units on PSN alone. James promises to show "some nice shiny graphs".

THE INSIDE GUIDE TO SETTING UP AN INDEPENDENT STUDIO

Robin Lacey, Beatnik Games

An open panel discussion about setting up an independent games studio from nothing and succeeding. Or should that be surviving? Advice from studio heads about setting up a team, making a good game and making it onto digital distribution.

AUDIO

AUDIO KEYNOTE

Adam Levenson, Activision

Truly interactive music and dialogue will revolutionise the video game narrative. In this keynote for the entire audio track, Activision's audio guru Levenson will describe some key aspects of this inevitable paradigm shift.

DESIGN

OPENING PLAYER METRICS TO COMMUNITY IN JUST CAUSE 2

Jim Blackhurst & Mike Oldman, Square Enix

Examing how metrics were elevated from an internal tool for offline analysis to an essential part of the community experience.

WORKING ON WIIWARE: FROM STUDENTS TO SWORDS AND SOLDIERS

Jasper Koning, Ronimo Games

Discussing the development of Ronimo's first WiiWare game. *Swords & Soldiers* started out as a Flash prototype. A quirky toolchain, extensive internal delays and balancing depth with accessibility are some of the challenges to be discussed.

ART

INSPIRATION IN ANIMATION

Jeff Pratt, Escape Studios

Pixar veteran Jeff Pratt explores sources of inspiration for animators, and how artists can generate fresh ideas by looking at film animation for reference. Jeff reveals what has inspired him over the years – everything from silent movies to classic Disney.

HOMESPUN FUN - THE ART AND DESIGN OF KAHOOTS

Ricky Haggett, Honeyslug

When Honeyslug created PSP Minis title Kahoots, they had no money to pay an artist. So they decided to make all the art themselves. This talk details the process of creating the world of Kahoots and why constraints foster creativity.

EVOLVE

THE IPHONE DEVELOPERS' CONFERENCE CALL

Alan Yu, ngmoco

With the App Store landscape changing almost daily, this panel discussion will provide first-hand accounts from leading iPhone developers on the changing business models, marketing strategies, and content trends at play on this unique format.

YESTERDAY'S DESIGNERS: TOMORROW'S SOCIAL TECH INNOVATORS

Gabe Zichermann, beamMe

Looking at the oppotunities open for game design thinkers to leverage their unique skills and insight with some of the world's biggest brands and most exciting startups. Drawing on research into game-thought innovation and practical experience.

WHY MOBILE GAMES WILL OUTPERFORM CONSOLE GAMING

Michael Schade, Fishlabs

Demonstrating the evolution of 3D mobile gaming from as little as software rendered 500KB Java games to over 100MB in full HD resolution OpenGL ES 2.0 hardware accelerated, true console-style, epic games and beyond.

GAMES AS A SERVICE: DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHAT IT MEANS?

Thomas Bidaux, ICO Partners

The concept of service is not that clearly defined. This talk provides a practical overview on how the components of an online game service should be designed and integrated in the production cycle to form an optimal player experience.

CODING

SPU ASSISTED RENDERING

Stephen McAuley, Bizarre Creations

The power of the PS3 is in the SPUs, but how do we take advantage of these processors to speed up our rendering? This talk looks at key issues of parallelisation and synchronisation, before giving real-world examples from *Blur*.

ADDRESSING HUMAN SCALABILITY WITH MULTI-USER EDITING

John Rittenhouse, CCP Games

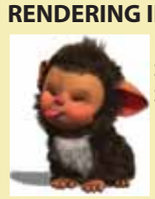
With the size and time required for creating content on the rise, human scalability factor is becoming an increasing issue in delivering more detailed open worlds. This talk as a result looks at ways to alleviate those bottlenecks.

RIGGED TO BLOW: POWERPLAY PIPELINE FOR SPLIT/SECOND

Matthew Rubin, Black Rock Studio

Authoring set pieces and destructible environments presents a unique set of challenges across code, art and design disciplines. This talk will describe the toolchain for producing the 'Powerplay' assets in *Split/Second*.

REAL-TIME HAIR SIMULATION AND RENDERING IN EYEPET



Ben Tayler, SCEE London Studio

Many titles avoid tackling realistic hair, citing workflow, processing, memory and rendering limitations. But the current generation of hardware is capable of achieving good results. Tayler describes the system developed from scratch for *EyePet*.

DEVELOP DEN

WHY ARE GAME SEQUELS OFTEN BETTER THAN FILM SEQUELS?

Ana Kronschnabl & Tomas Rawlings, FluffyLogic

It is easy to think of games whose sequel is equal, or indeed better, than the original – *Fallout* to *Fallout 2*, *GTA* to *Vice City*. Here Ana (a filmmaker) and Tomas (a games designer) talk about why this is the case: why is a film better the first time around?

SEX, BRAWLS, AND MAGIC DUELS: GAME DESIGN BEYOND THE TV

Dajana Dimovska, Copenhagen Game Productions

What do a no-graphics sex game, a one-button racing game, and an accelerometer-enabled wizard game have in common? This talk explores three games developed by the Copenhagen Game Collective, with an eye towards repurposing 'social' gaming.

PRODUCTION

USER-MADE CONTENT AND SOCIAL NETWORKS ON XBOX LIVE

Ben Board, Microsoft

Attendees will hear how to leverage the Xbox Live framework to implement user-generated content, and social network integration, and how to work with the platform policy requirements to ensure a smooth passage through certification.

PRODUCTIVITY: MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR YOUR TEAM

Jason Avent, Black Rock Studios

The talk will incorporate concrete examples of how real-time update, build systems, tools and practices can be designed to reduce iteration time, decrease frustration and empower your team to boost productivity.

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Serve and protect

As the game development sector's ecosystem grows increasingly intricate, so does the law that underpins it. To make things a little clearer, **Will Freeman** spoke to Brand Protect barrister Bernard Whyatt about the bewildering world of IP protection…

The world of legal terminology is perennially confusing for many game developers. With pressing deadlines and bugs to fix, there's little time left to spend catching up with the latest changes to the myriad laws that affect the creative, technological and media industries.

Things are made no easier by the constant flux of local and international legalese, but one area – namely intellectual property law – is so significant to games development that a fundamental understanding is absolutely essential. To make that task easier, firms like Brand Protect exist, offering tailoured support for the games industry that strives to provide a value for money, easy to use IP-focused service.

A Brand Protect barrister, Bernard Whyatt is a man who speaks the language of law fluently, but fortunately for developers, he also understands the tongue of the layman. As such, he is a font of practical advice, and a champion of the need to trademark the fruits of your labour.

THE LETTER OF THE LAW

"Registration of a game's title helps to involve authorities more quickly," offers Whyatt. "Trademarks protect against counterfeiting, as well as other developers using similar names to the games that you are developing, who try to use the reputation developed by the owner of the game and thereby confuse the public.

"Trademarks also add value to your business. It is problematic to license IP that is not registered. Once a title is registered then it can be licensed – in part or full – mortgaged, charged and even sold."

The reality is that most developers know they should invest time and the reasonably small cost in registering their IP, but with the actual impact of the pitfalls of unprotected works a relative mystery, for many – trademarks and related protection are a last minute thought.

Whyatt is quick to warn that trademark registering is an essential process: "No one needs to register the name of a game, but not to do so leaves a hostage to fortune.

"Japanese developers are becoming more aggressive in the way that they want to own intellectual property in the UK and Europe. Developers must plan to protect and promote theirs here and abroad."

"If you decide not to register your games titles then in order to protect those titles you need to rely on the tort of passing-off. In order to prove passing-off, the owner bears the burden of proof in every aspect of the action. When a lawyer says this to you, think money. You need to prove every aspect of the case. Contrast this with a trademark infringement action where in certain circumstances the trademark owner merely needs to prove the existence of the right for the court to find in his favour."

The truth of the matter is that for a modest three-figure sum, you can protect your IP for a decade, or save £200 over ten years, and run the risk of funding an ugly legal battle.

As if that weren't enough for developers to worry about, trademark ownership is increasingly becoming an international competition, as Whyatt highlights: "The Japanese developers are becoming more aggressive in the way that they want to own intellectual property in the UK and in Europe. Developers must plan to protect and promote their intellectual property here and abroad."

A TWO-WAY STREET

Studios nervous about the pressure to understand legal parlance and systems may take solace in the fact that the need to learn constantly is a two-way process. The rapid diversification of the development sector is a constant challenge to the legal professionals charged with representing video game IP owners.

"The legal industry changes at its own inimitable pace," reveals Whyatt, who admits that legal process with regard to IP is often slowly responsive, rather than proactive.

IP law's precedent-led approach to catering for developing industries typically relies on analogy, using the details of previous relevant cases to apply and set new standards. That means lawyers are pitched in a constant struggle to catch-up.

Still, with Brand Protect and its contemporaries keeping a close eye on the games industry, and developers increasingly conscious of the merits of legal support, the future looks bright for those looking to protect the results of their time, effort and creative energy.

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GfK ChartTrack

2009 European Report

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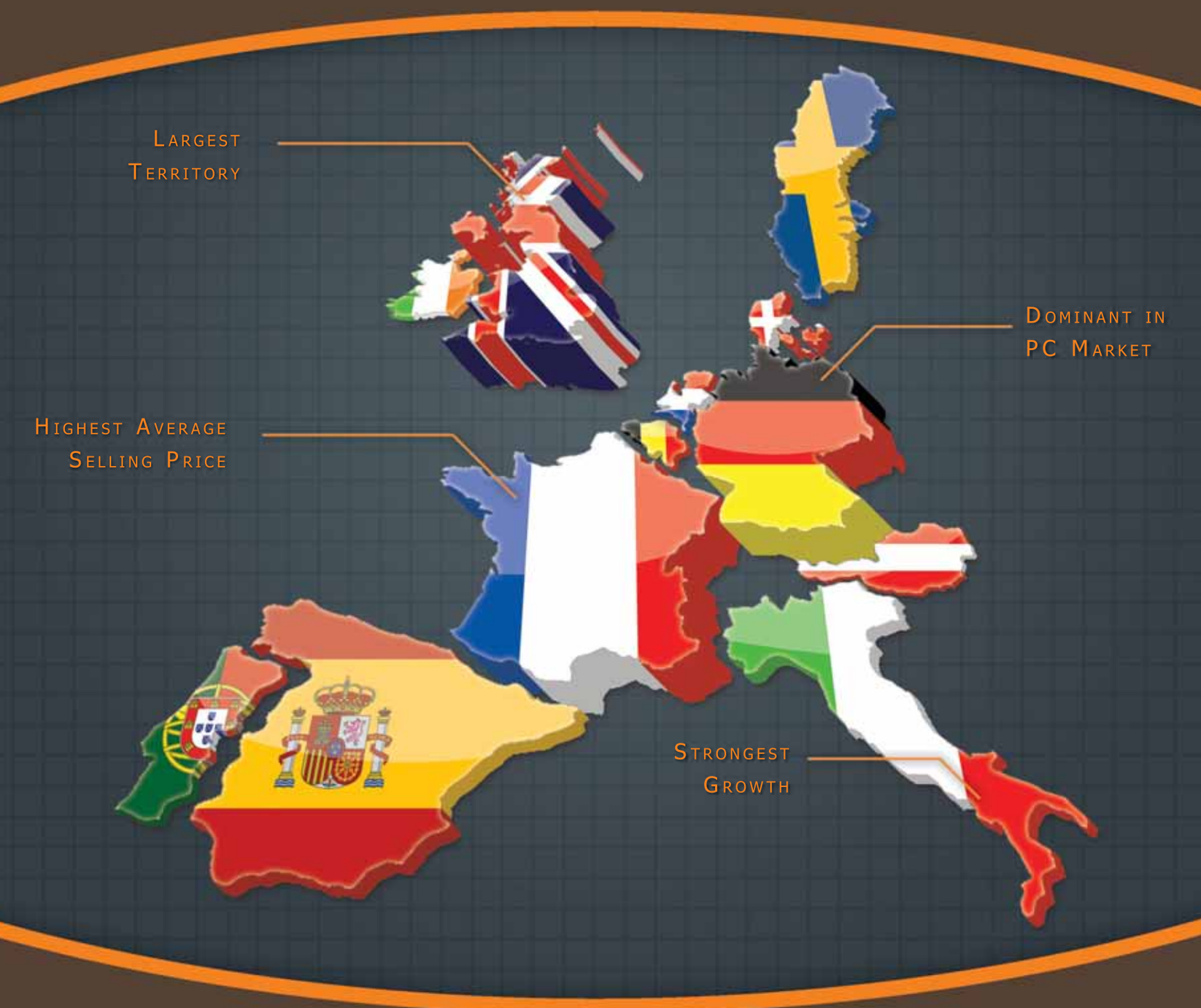
- Top publishers and titles shown



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DEEP SILVER

Tracking System

The 2010 edition of the Develop 100 is published with this issue. The widely-read list of the world's most successful game studios is based on data from GfK Chart-Track. Here business group director **Dorian Bloch** explains the background to the figures and provides some analysis of this year's listing…

We took up the challenge of coding every game that sells in the UK back in 2004 and by the launch of the first *Develop 100* co-produced wiith Chart-Track (covering sales in 2005) we had coded up around 10,000 individual products.

Roll on to the end of 2009 for the latest edition and this had risen to 17,500 products, all with developer credit to an independent or publisher-owned studio and a country of coding origin. This means that we have probably the most accurate database of titles anywhere in the world.

Sure, this is applied to sales in the UK, the third largest gaming market in the world and therefore cannot account for the cultural differences that would apply if we included USA and Japan. Nevertheless, this makes for a fascinating account of what actually sells in the UK, coupled to developer share rather than the more traditional publisher share of the market which is reported the world over.

We recognise the importance of giving credit where credit is due which is why every week we list the developer against each title in our standard weekly report, as seen on our website and as subscribed to by just about every publisher active in this market. The international profile of the various charts for video games is higher than ever.

> ***By 2009's end one console per person in the UK had been sold: cumulative console sales since '95 are 61m, UK population in 2009 was around 61.5m.***

Some publishers and developers are now reaping the benefits with the monthly syndicated reports that rank developers according to their ongoing performance in the UK charts. Get in touch if you want more regular updates – you'll receive a full monthly report for free to give you an idea of what's on offer (the monthly ranking of publisher-owned and independent studios, the top titles by format and even a sales breakdown by territory). Ad-hoc reports are available at any time on a developer's own titles – or its competitors'.

STAT ATTACK

Let us cast our minds back to the fairly recent history of 2007, the first year when we had all of the current generation systems in place and the start of Nintendo's domination of the No.1 developer spot, now three years running.

Nintendo's domination signalled the widening 'casual' demographic in the traditional console gaming market, with games like *Dr Kawashima Brain Training* on DS plus *Wii Fit* and *Wii Play*. By the end of 2009 *Dr Kawashima* was still the biggest selling stand-alone game of all time in the UK (3.5m units) while *Wii Fit* and *Wii Play* held fourth and fifth in the all time best sellers list. No.2 was *GTA: San Andreas*, the defining moment from the previous PS2 generation back in 2004. (No.3 has its own section below – *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* was the title that single-handedly swung the market back to a more traditional core gamer focus.)

So three Nintendo firsty-party titles on single formats occupy slots in the all time Top 5 volume sellers. A pretty impressive feat. And all of the above is before we even mention *Wii Sports*, which is bundled with every Wii console and found a place within one in four UK homes by the end of 2009 – 6.5m is Nintendo Wii's installed in the UK and therefore 6.5m copies of *Wii Sports*.

By the end of 2009 one console per person living in the UK had been sold (cumulative console sales since 1995 are around 61m, UK population in 2009 was around 61.5m).

UK DEVELOPER TRENDS

Of all the thousands of games titles that we tracked and the revenue generated in 2007, the most popular format across all

The 2010 edition of the Develop 100 comes with this month's issue

You can also head to Develop100.com for the full list

DEVELOP 100: #1 – #50

ELSPA | Chart Track

1	NINTENDO	JP	26	EA BRIGHT LIGHT	UK
2	INFINITY WARD	US	27	UBISOFT FRANCE	FR
3	EA CANADA	CA	28	EA BLACK BOX	CA
4	UBISOFT MONTREAL	CA	29	NAUGHTY DOG	US
5	FOUNDATION 9	UK US	30	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	UK
6	SEGA	JP	31	LONDON STUDIO	UK
7	CAPCOM	JP	32	GUERRILLA GAMES	NL
8	TREYARCH	US	33	BETHESDA	US
9	YUKE'S	JP	34	RADICAL	CA
10	LEVEL 5	JP	35	VOLITION	US
11	TRAVELLER'S TALES	UK	36	MAXIS	US
12	NEVERSOFT	US	37	GEARBOX SOFTWARE	US
13	KONAMI DIGITAL ENT.	JP	38	HARMONIX	US
14	TURN 10 STUDIOS	US	39	1ST PLAYABLE	US
15	CODEMASTERS	UK	40	PANDEMIC STUDIOS	US
16	BUNGIE	US	41	GAME FREAK	JP
17	SLIGHTLY MAD STUDIOS	UK	42	BIOWARE	CA
18	VICARIOUS VISIONS	US	43	ENSEMBLE STUDIOS	US
19	VISCERAL GAMES	US	44	A2M	CA
20	ROCKSTAR NORTH	UK	45	SONIC TEAM	JP
21	THE SIMS STUDIO	US	46	KUJU ENTERTAINMENT	UK
22	VALVE	US	47	CAT DADDY	US
23	NAMCO	JP	48	HB STUDIOS	CA
24	ROCKSTEADY STUDIOS	UK	49	UBISOFT ROMANIA	RO
25	EA TIBURON	US	50	RAVEN SOFTWARE	US

DEEP SILVER

The Develop 100 2010 shows independents in rude health, Bloch points out

developers turned out to be 360 with 21 per cent. That was followed by DS with 20 per cent, PS2 with 17 per cent, Wii with 15 per cent, PS3 with ten per cent, PC ten per cent and PSP seven per cent.

In 2009 the percentage share has changed dramatically, with 360 continuing to climb (28 per cent), Wii just about holding steady (24 per cent, actually up from No.4 to No.2), PS3 doubling (21 per cent, up from No.5 to No.3), DS declining four per cent (16 per cent, down from No.2 to No.4), PC also down four per cent (six per cent of the market, at No.5) and then PSP (three per cent) and PS2 (two per cent).

When looking at all products sold in 2007 the share for independent studios was 39 per cent (with 61 per cent being publisher owned). In 2009 this had dropped to 36 per cent independent (64 per cent publisher-owned), so at first glance not a huge decline.

However, the bigger difference is highlighted in the number of independent studios within the Top 100 – almost half in 2007 (48) compared to just over two-fifths in 2009 (42).

Games produced in the top four territories (USA, Japan, Canada and UK) accounted for 90 per cent of all units sold in 2007 and 89 per cent in 2009 and in descending order for 2009 they are USA at No.1 (32 per cent), Japan No.2 (27 per cent), UK No.3 (18 per cent), and Canada No.4 (13 per cent). Within these numbers USA and Canada have remained stable, Japan has gained 1.2 per cent and UK has lost 1.4 per cent.

Within the UK (i.e. of the 18 per cent of 75m units of product sold in the UK developed by UK studios), independent studios accounted for 42 per cent, publisher owned 58 per cent. Indie share has actually increased dramatically over 2008 (36 per cent). Reasons for this stem from the huge effect that Rockstar's *GTA IV* had on UK developer market share in 2008 and is also

> ***Within Canadian-made games 82 per cent of product sold is by a publisher-owned studio, no surprise given the many studio investments in the region.***

due to new products in 2009 such as *Virtua Tennis 2009* (Sumo Digital/Sega), *F1 2009* (Sumo Digital/Codemasters), but moreover in Q3 '09 the mega-hit *Batman: Arkham Assylum* (Rocksteady Studios/Eidos-Square Enix) and also *NFS: Shift* (Slightly Mad Studios/EA). Also of note is Asylum's *Peppa Pig: The Game*, a notable success on DS and Gusto Games' Wii version of *Ashes Cricket 2009*.

Within Canadian-made games a massive 82 per cent of product sold is by a publisher-owned studio, the most top-heavy of all four territories, but something that will come as no surprise given the investment over the years by EA, Ubisoft, Activision and others in that region. Products such as *FIFA 10* (EA Canada), *Assassin's Creed II* (Ubisoft Monteal) and *Prototype* (by Activision-owned Radical) spring immediately to mind.

DEVELOP 100: #51 - #100

ELSPA | ChartTrack

51	EPIC GAMES		76	MONKEY BAR GAMES	
52	KROME STUDIOS		77	TERMINAL REALITY	
53	INSOMNIAC		78	CRYSTAL DYNAMICS	
54	MEDIA MOLECULE		79	SORA	
55	ROCKSTAR LEEDS		80	BLIZZARD	
56	LUXOFLUX		81	CRITERION GAMES	
57	HUDSON		82	BIG FISH GAMES	
58	TECHLAND		83	POLYPHONY DIGITAL	
59	CREATIVE ASSEMBLY		84	GENIUS SONORITY	
60	COOKING MAMA LIMITED		85	N-SPACE	
61	FREESTYLEGAMES		86	MAGIC POCKETS	
62	SUCKER PUNCH		87	BEENOX	
63	MIDWAY		88	MONOLITH	
64	EA LA		89	EUROCOM	
65	TRANSMISSION GAMES		90	MIDWAY NEWCASTLE	
66	GRIN		91	ROUTE 1 GAMES	
67	EXIENT		92	LIONHEAD STUDIOS	
68	EA DICE		93	RELIC	
69	INIS		94	ALTRON	
70	ASYLUM		95	WIZARBOX	
71	RESPONDESIGN		96	SLAM PRODUCTIONS	
72	REBELLION		97	GUSTO GAMES	
73	EA SALT LAKE		98	HIGH VOLTAGE	
74	BLACK ROCK STUDIOS		99	ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO	
75	HEAVY IRON STUDIOS		100	5TH CELL	

A MODERN MARVEL

Infinity Ward's placing at No.2 this year cannot go without comment. It made the fastest-selling game of all time in the UK: *Modern Warfare 2*. Launch was on Tuesday, November 10th 2009 and on Wednesday, November 11th GfK Chart-Track was the first territory in the world to break the news on day one sales – 1.23m at £47.7m. The 24-hour sell through number beat the entire first week on sale for the previous record holder (Rockstar's *GTA IV* sold through 927,000 – or £39.9m worth – in its five day launch week). It is amazing to note that in terms of the day one sell-through, the UK accounted for a massive 26 per cent of the 4.7m estimated to have sold through in UK/USA.

So for the launch week we tracked the sales on a daily basis for Activision and we were again the first to break the news that *MW2* racked up 1.78m units and generated £67.4m in the UK during week one. Putting that in perspective, Infinity Ward/Activision's title grossed almost twice as much as the entire entertainment software market in the previous week. The Xbox 360 version of *MW2* was the lead format and sold over a million UK units in week one and grossed £38.5m – itself more than the entire market for the previous week. By the end of 2009 *MW2* had amassed eight straight weeks at No.1 and moved from simply within the Top 10 to being the No.3 cumulative unit seller (2.93m) and the No1. revenue generator (£112m) in the history of UK videogaming.

Thanks to *MW2* 2009 was the year where the traditional videogame 'core-gamer' market proved that a truly high quality, cinematic, artistic, explosive, action-packed gaming experience could generate sales of such magnitude, that all other entertainment day one and five-day entertainment industry box office, book and video game sell-through records were eclipsed.

On a global perspective the *MW2* week one figure of $550m was way above previous best, which already saw a game at the top of the tree (*GTA IV*'s record was $500m). For comparison with Hollywood, the cinematic world-wide box office record was *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* with $394m in one week.

Depending on the type of developer you are there is either rationalisation, merger, expansion, rude good health or just plain survival on the cards for your studio. Having a hit product in what might be 'only' the third biggest territory in the world means that people tend to sit up and take notice of your talents. Ultimately a studio is judged on the sales success of their games – so why shouldn't they be recognised for the commercial success of their products? The *Develop 100* is a fascinating report and is a great read for all publishers and developers.

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CUBIC
motion

Aussie Indie Rules

The financial crisis hit Australia's video game sector hard, but in the wake of several high profile studio closures numerous indies have risen from the ashes. **Will Freeman** sat down with some of the country's developers now making a mark on the international stage…

According to the Game Developers Association of Australia, the industry it represents is growing at an incredible rate. During 2008 alone, the country's video game sector reportedly grew by an impressive 47 per cent to $1.96 billion.

Yet thanks to a business ecosystem that depends heavily on the US, the economic downturn meant times were tough in Australian games development during 2009, and the larger studios felt the pinch as staff cuts became all too common.

Now the industry is bouncing back, and a new model based on small indie teams is proving incredibly popular. So what do the people getting Australia back on the map think of the country's games industry today?

As the rise of the indie studios like your own and the proliferation of iPhone and online games continues, do you feel being positioned as you are in Australia means you are well placed to take advantage of that trend?

Alexandra Peters, Firemint: Digital distribution is a big thing for Australian developers, because with it becoming more prominent and easier to access, it's becoming less relevant where you are geographically. Just in terms of time zones and flights and meeting people and stuff like that, it's getting much easier as everything goes online.

David Zwierzchaczewski, 5th World Media: That's a really big thing that we've noticed. Digital distribution has taken away a lot of those borders. I honestly think that now you could set up a developer in the middle of the bush and it wouldn't matter. That has been a big thing for this country. There's also been a lot of infrastructure support from the Government that's really helped us.

> ***If you know the right avenues to go down then at a government level Australia can be a very supportive place. There are great incentives to help start-ups and get the games industry growing.***
>
> Andrew Goulding, Brawsome Games

Simon Joslin, The Voxel Agents: To reiterate some of that, our company, for example, has three founders. All three are living off income support from the Government that is designed to pay a year's wage while you set up your company. That's great that they provide that, so that we can concentrate on establishing our own IP rather than worrying about paying the rent. As well as a great range of funding bodies, there's also an excess of people looking for this kind of work in the country right now. It's really easy to find people who are keen to work in games in Australia now. They're happy to do it cheap too, which is good for indies.

It seems you have a positive view of regional bodies and the support offered to your games industry by the government?

Peters: For us in Victoria the state government really does a lot to help out lots of different segments of the games industry. We're very lucky, and I hear the Queensland guys get a lot of help too. Hopefully we're set to make a lot of progress with the federal government too. I know everyone is really keen to see that happen.

Andrew Goulding, Brawsome Games: If you know the right avenues to go down then at a government level Australia can be a very supportive place. There are great incentives in place to help start-ups and to get the games industry growing – if you know about them.

Jason Seed, Codesion: What it boils down too, across the entire IT industry in Australia, is that to be successful you have to reach

outside of Australia. You've always had to do that, and this current fragmentation of larger companies that's happening is actually working in our favour, as we've always been that way anyway. We've got lots of small teams working from a long way away, and to make money we've always had to sell to the US or Europe or Asia anyway.

So what challenges unique to Australia do game developers face?
John Lycette, esc Factory: Despite what's changed, it is still the isolation factor. It's great to see that digital distribution means our product can easily reach everyone, but face-to-face meetings are obviously still hard. You do need that financial support to get those face-to-face meetings happening, especially if like me you're very indie.
Peters: Again, I can only speak for the Victoria area, but there is help in place to aid with that kind of thing, and to attend trade shows and so on. The federal Government offers support too, through support programs for exporters. All of us here are exporters really, and on that note, from our point of view the most challenging thing is the Australian dollar and how strong it is. That strength comes from all the resources, and all the mining, which lifts everything up. We'd really like things to kind of go down.

What are the solutions to that isolation issue then?
Phil Larsen, Halfbrick Studios: I'm the entire marketing and PR department for Halfbrick, and overcoming that problem involves me working to American time quite often. It seems like a miniscule issue, but in reality it means we're always a day a head or a day behind. So I have to arrive at work and work based on what happened the day before, because I'm selling to a worldwide issue. That may not seem too big a deal, but in the games industry things like coverage in the media and release dates can be really affected by 24 hours.
Peters: Yes. I was up at 3am for the iPad launch.
Larsen: Exactly, so in terms of solutions we need to establish a better way of communicating with the people we work with overseas, and especially in America, as for me I have to deal with Microsoft everyday. The solutions are to get face-to-face with these guys at things like GDC, and help them understand where we are at and what we're about, and understand the challenges we are facing, so that when we come to them and say 'we're having problems with this', they'll be more receptive. Then they can understand what we need done and what kind of timeframes we need.

Goulding: To add to that, dealing with overseas companies makes it very hard to take a holiday, because we have to work to other country's public holidays, and miss our own. It means you don't get to take off their public holidays either, and end up working from Tuesday to Saturday, and usually Monday too, which is a strain.
Peters: Trying to hit both the US and European time zones makes things harder.
Larsen: Of course, people who work in the media always work late, so that helps.
Peters: Exactly, and there's a real advantage there. It's really awesome when somebody wants a quote fast at 3am in their time zone, and you can be the one to provide it. We're always ready for that, which is great coverage for us.

How much of a sense of community is their shared between developers in Australia?
Larsen: Well, many of us all share relationships with the same publishers or platform holders on different projects, and there's definitely a sense that we all want each other to do well. For indies working on the iPhone, it's not as if any of the other Australian studios do well it is going to detract from our success. There's so many opportunities on the iPhone, we can all find our own way, and maybe help each other when we can.

> ***"It's great to see that digital distribution means our product can easily reach everyone, but face-to-face meetings are still hard. You need that financial support to get those happening."***
>
> John Lycette, esc Factory

Joslin: There's two big things that are going on in Melbourne community-wise. The IGDA has recently sprung up with a new lust for life, and has expanded massively in the last year, which has been great. The other thing that has been happening there is that the office we share is something like an industry cluster, and one of the CEOs there has set up something of a sharing arrangement with a bunch of other indies, so they can come in and share space in the office. We have access to their dev kits, and they're really experienced dudes that share advice and help where they can. It also offers what becomes almost cheaper rent, making it a lot easier to set-up, so that's been really good.
Larsen: The thing about Australian development is that we've all got good ideas, and we're never going to run out of them. There's just loads coming out of all the indies, so it's the executions that are the key, and Halfbrick likes to execute in the best way possible. If other studios do the same we think that's great. We all need to work together and get lots of good stuff out there.
Goulding: Another thing here is that, in my

WIZARDS OF OZ

Alexandra Peters, Community Manager, Firemint
Specialising in 'big games for small devices', developer Firemint is most famous for creating iPhone hit *Flight Control.*

David Zwierzchaczewski, CEO, 5th World Media
Based in Brisbane, 5th World Media creates both video games and animated television, reaching its audience through social media.

Simon Joslin, Founder, The Voxel Agents
Formed by Queensland University of Technology graduates, The Voxel Agents has met most success with its iPhone hit *Train Conductor.*

Andrew Goulding, Director, Brawsome Games
Brawsome is currently putting the finishing touches on its canine-based 2D point and click adventure *Jolly Rover*.

Jason Seed, CEO, Codesion
Hosted source code management expert Codesion offers solutions for some 3,400 companies, including a wealth of developers.

John Lycette, Artist, esc Factory
Pitched as an 'alliance of creative geeks', esc Factory is currently at work expanding on its portfolio of iPhone games.

Phil Larsen, Marketing/PR co-ordinator, Halfbrick
One of Austalia's most prolific studios, Halfbrick has worked across numerous projects handling licensed and original IP

Above: The full Firemint team, who create big games for small devices

experience, we don't really have to worry about NDAs when we talk to other Australian developers. We usually just chat openly because like Phil said, people here have enough of their own ideas. They just don't need your ideas. I can't say there's any precedent for this, but I've never known there to be any issue with IP stealing. It's mostly just employee stealing [*laughter*].

Joslin: The positive side of the games industry is a relatively new thing in some ways. I've only three years experience, but it does feel like there's been a huge pendulum swing of attitude in the industry here in the past year. There's been an indie revival here, and combined with the other things happening, there's a new atmosphere – a new drive.

Peters: Yes. There's indies everywhere in Australia. It's so amazingly thriving, dynamic and exciting. It's a great place to be right now.

Larsen: There's been so many breakout successes from here too, like *Flight Control* and *Real Racing* – and hopefully some in the future – that it's really helping us all. Once we get a good portfolio of hits that succeed across the industry and internationally, that's when the good studios will start to have more motivation and opportunities. That's good for us all, and that's what the community can bring us.

> ***"We have grads that have been with us for ages, who have gone on to senior positions. We look at the individual, and we're not just about what course they did. It's down to quality of their work and what they can do."***
>
> Alexandra Peters, Firemint

Does your geographical isolation make access to tech any harder than normal?

Peters: If you've got good relationships with the tech guys, I don't think distance or location is a factor at all. If you do good work, the hardware manufacturers will notice.

Seed: One limitation, though, is broadband in Australia. The hosting fees and whole infrastructure cost is extremely high in Australia in comparison with anywhere else in the world. You've also got latency issues. The tyranny of distance affects so much in Australia. There's only a couple of internet pipes that come into Australia, so it's pretty much what you could call a control duopoly. Everything's expensive, for the consumers using games and downloading content to the developers using new SaaS stuff. It's going to be hard developing in those environments when connectivity is an issue.

Peters: There is in fact a massive infrastructure project that's just getting started, to establish a national broadband network, which I think is the biggest infrastructure project that the country has eever seen. We're all really waiting for that to happen.

How is Australia's games industry supported by educational courses? Is there a good supply of suitably trained graduates?

Larsen: I can't speak for the quality of the courses themselves, because I never did one in Brisbane, but with the Queensland University of Technology we have a great relationship that's been very useful. Just a few weeks ago they let us use their filming studios to do some videos for nothing really. They just suggested we do a guest lecture. They always have interns that are keen to come by and learn, and it is brilliant to be part of that.

Peters: We love graduates and we hire loads of them. We have grads that have been with us for ages, who have gone on to quite senior positions. We always look at the individual, and we're not just about what course they did, but for programming in particular we get a lot of people that are really well trained in the 'hard' degrees such as engineering. But at the end of the day, it's down to the quality of their work and what they can do.

Zwierzchaczewski: The other thing I found is that a lot of the lecturers are very active in engaging with us, and finding out what we want from their students, and what they should be teaching them. That's really handy, and quite refreshing. It's so much better than having a set, rigid syllabus, that ends up being of no use to the students or to the industry at the end of the day.

Goulding: The one downside to having all these superb games and game-related courses is that they are producing far more graduates than we can hope to employ. There is an over-supply issue for certain.

Peters: They have to work hard to stand-out from the crowd though, which can be great for the industry in Australia. It's tough, and it can sometimes be to see the talent of an individual when they show group work, but for this country it has been very good having so many graduates.

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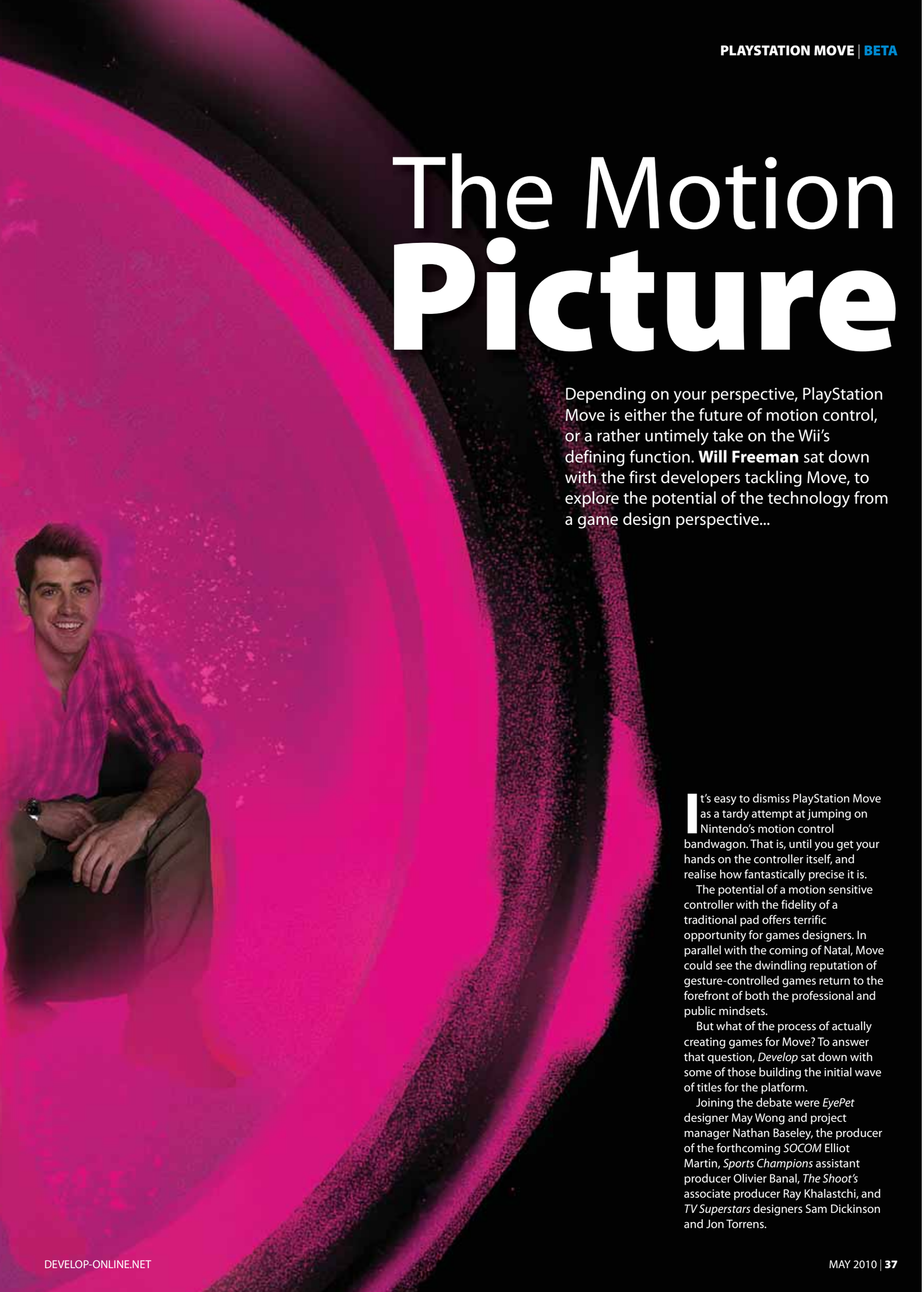
The Motion Picture

Depending on your perspective, PlayStation Move is either the future of motion control, or a rather untimely take on the Wii's defining function. **Will Freeman** sat down with the first developers tackling Move, to explore the potential of the technology from a game design perspective...



It's easy to dismiss PlayStation Move as a tardy attempt at jumping on Nintendo's motion control bandwagon. That is, until you get your hands on the controller itself, and realise how fantastically precise it is.

The potential of a motion sensitive controller with the fidelity of a traditional pad offers terrific opportunity for games designers. In parallel with the coming of Natal, Move could see the dwindling reputation of gesture-controlled games return to the forefront of both the professional and public mindsets.

But what of the process of actually creating games for Move? To answer that question, *Develop* sat down with some of those building the initial wave of titles for the platform.

Joining the debate were *EyePet* designer May Wong and project manager Nathan Baseley, the producer of the forthcoming *SOCOM* Elliot Martin, *Sports Champions* assistant producer Olivier Banal, *The Shoot's* associate producer Ray Khalastchi, and *TV Superstars* designers Sam Dickinson and Jon Torrens.

Top-to-bottom: Sony movers Nathen Baseley, Ray Khalastchi, Jon Torrens and Sam Dickinson

From a game design perspective, what opportunities has working with Move provided to open up the game or genre you're working with?

Torrens: Really the Move controller lets us interact in loads of different new ways. Typically, a player is presented with one control method in game, and encouraged to simply repeat that. In *TV Superstars*, the controller is used in all kinds of ways. From being used as a whisk or knife in the cooking part of our game to being a way to affect the physics of the player's character as it flies through the air in the action game show parody. The precision of Move means that there are loads and loads of different ways for the player to interact with the game.

Dickinson: I think one of the most interesting things about technology like this is that you try to think of all the inventive new ways you can use the controller. It's not just what you want the player to do full-stop. It does make you ask: 'What can we do here? What expressive ideas can we introduce to the experience?'.

Wong: With a game like *EyePet*, Move helped us, in that we wanted to use live video feed in the game to make it feel like EyePet is actually in your living room. The controller in the player's hands becomes things in the game like a shower, shampoo [bottle] or toy, so that the player can really feel like they really do interact with the pet. Move lets the player feel like everything is actually in their hands. It makes things much more realistic and believable.

Baseley: I just want to second what May said really. For *EyePet* it's all about immersion. Augmented reality is about making the player think that they in the same world as the EyePet. The Move controller is something that actually exists in the real world and the EyePet world. In terms of the illusion and the immersion, it makes things one-on-one. The pet can see the Move controller and so can the player.

Martin: I think the biggest benefit of the Move controller for the *SOCOM* series is that of accessibility. Motion controllers in general give people a more accessible means or interface with which to play games, as proved well by Nintendo. The third-person shooter genre of game for some people is typically very difficult to pick up and play. It involves changing the viewpoint of the character, using something like the Dual Shock controller, and some people just can't map that kind of interface to – without meaning to sound rude – their brain.

With the move controller what it allows us to do with *SOCOM* is have the player basically point at enemies on screen with Move as if they were aiming with a real gun in their hand. It's a huge change to the genre because rather than having to move the camera, you can just point and shoot. I think Move is going to make that style of game a lot more accessible to a lot more people.

Banal: *Sports Champions* is a sports simulation and Move, with its level of precision and its fidelity, allows you to really replicate the real life situations and the motions that appear in each included sport. That's something the 3D tracking system allows you to do, whether it's moving a bat or – in table tennis – putting spin on a ball. You can get a really very high level of precision and realism with Move. That's something that is now possible.

Khalastchi: For us, what Move introduces is really about the immediacy of not having to rely on other buttons. We've got this arcade shooter, which is very fast paced, and instead of having to use buttons for various powers and inputs we can use gestures instead. It really makes the game faster, more immediate and more immersive. We used one device, Move, to incorporate all the features of the genre. It's opened up a lot for us, while keeping things up to speed.

With games like *SOCOM* and *EyePet* supporting Move, the tech doesn't seem aimed exclusively at either casual or hardcore audiences. Has it allowed you to make single games that appeal to audiences from both demographics?

Martin: *SOCOM* is a series that has traditionally been perceived as a hardcore title. One of the things the team has always wanted to do is open the game experience up to other types of players.

The game will support Move and the traditional Dual Shock controllers which long standing *SOCOM* gamers are used to, so that they can continue with their experience with the level of finesse that they are familiar with.

But Move allows the player to correlate what's happening on the screen to their actions so they don't loose any of the level of control; it's just presented in a way that's easier for them to understand.

That allows the new *SOCOM* to be a game that genuinely appeals to a hardcore audience as well as the newer casual gamer who may have never have considered a title like it before.

Dickinson: Move does make it a lot easier for what you'd traditionally see as a hardcore gamer and a casual gamer to play together at the same time. That means family and party games like *TV Superstars*, which we're working on, don't have the barrier of someone understanding the controller better than someone else. Move certainly introduces that.

Torrens: I agree. I think Move will definitely be revolutionary in that way. You do have this distinction between the hardcore and the casual and the Wii's come along as something people look at and think 'that's the thing with the pointer, that's for families and not for serious games'. Meanwhile the PS3 maybe has been seen as exclusive and a bit hardcore. There's a division there.

Now I think the PS3 will become properly inclusive and people will think hardcore games and casual games all use one controller. I really feel that there won't just be casual gamers picking it up, but the hardcore gamers picking it up and realising we can all

play together. Everyone's included in the same thing, and that's a big deal.

Baseley: For me the thing about the precision is interesting too. If you look around the room today, we've all got very different titles underway. The move platform presents so many different options, because you've got the camera, meaning you can use the live feed that we can do; some of the other titles use the precision like the sports titles; or you can adapt and use it more generally. As a platform, for designers and developers it just gives us loads of options we can play with, that always come back to the same controller.

The consumer interface is the same regardless of the title, but the way that developers use it and adapt it is very different. It's very versatile set of options, that should create some interesting games.

Martin: In the case of *SOCOM*, the Move controller support was never planned in from the beginning, so it was something, which internally, as the Move initiative gathered momentum, the team were asked to implement. To be honest, initially they were hesitant because they thought that a new control system meant that they would completely have to redesign the game. Actually they managed to get the basic implementation up and running in a matter of just a few hours.

It worked first time, and not only did it work, but it was immediately very intuitive, and it didn't require any great change of mindset. It was very easy to pick up and play straight away.

From that, because they didn't have to invest the time in prototyping lots of things, it allowed them to just concentrate on how they could use Move in more creative ways throughout the world of the game. In some senses Move fuelled a new branch of design within *SOCOM*.

What have you found are the challenges of working with Move?

Banal: On *Sports Champions* the team at Zindagi Games, who are developing the game and who have also been involved in the design of the motion control system, got really good at replicating player movements very, very accurately. The problem with that is Move replicates very accurately what the player is doing wrong.

A few user tests revealed that what the designers had got comfortable with, the players were struggling with. That really made them think about accessibility, within that precise device environment. They put a lot of effort into implementing an easy mode that offered a more forgiving approach to movement. That meant that the entry level was pretty low for people not at all used to any video games or the sport that is the theme of the game they are playing.

But that still allows for the difficulty to go all the way up to a level of precision and fidelity that allows the more dedicated and more experienced players to really enjoy themselves. That was the way to give a full spectrum of gamers profiles a way to play together. You can adapt the precision to cater for everyone, which is brilliant.

Khalastchi: To add to that, it's important to remember that while Move does open a lot of opportunities, it does ultimately come down to good game design. It's not an answer to every problem there is, and that's really key if you're tackling developing any kind of motion control game.

The cool thing on our side is that the actual controller itself has be developed in tandem with our software, so that we've been back and forth with all of the teams across the world who've been creating the hardware itself, who have actually been responding to the software, which is really cool.

Relative to the typical hurdles faced by developers, is Move an 'easy' platform to work with?

Baseley: To be honest any of the challenges we've had have been the same challenges we've had before working on anything in games design. Maybe they are slightly different, but they're definitely no more or less substantial.

Dickinson: Absolutely. It's petty much the same as any kind of new tech that you're working with for the first time. You'll always meet with problems you have to overcome, but working with Move is no better or worse I don't think.

Wong: Yes. Before, in the last *EyePet* game, we had to use the Magic Cards and hand gestures, where as now we use the motion controller. But Move shows how just one new thing can move the game forward.

Torrens: Often in a motion control game you're controlling something in just two dimensions, whether it is on a flat or vertical plane. However, with the Move controller, because we're actually working for movement in a real 3D space, there is that much more that you then have to make sure your design is that precise for.

We hadn't completely considered that before we started work, and it does place great demands on us, but because of that there's also far greater opportunities.

Sony's Navigation Controller (above), along with the main Move motion sensitive wand (below).

On The Horizon

The increasingly prominent GameHorizon Conference in Gateshead attracts attendees from across the business spectrum in order to discern where the future of the games development industry lays. **Stuart Richardson** spent time with the event's advisory board to find out more…

What distinguishes GameHorizon from other industry events and conferences currently tempting sector professionals?

Carri Cunliffe: GameHorizion is unique in that it is the only executive-level conference that we have in Europe. It offers people really high-level networking, the chance to meet the real decision-makers in the games industry. Those delegates also come from quite a wide range of games companies. You can meet people there from social games companies, casual games companies, high-end publishers and a great deal of representitives from independent games companies as well.

The conference isn't just looking at the games industry, but we are also observing trends from other industries to work out a 'best practice' for our own. This year we will be looking at the music industry and observing how they changed from the big record labels to digital distribution of their music to creating community fanbases through viral marketing.

"The music industry handled the transition into digital really badly. It will be interesting to hear the lessons its execs believe have learnt from that."

Simon Prytherch, Lightning Fish

Simon Prytherch: From my own perspective, it's probobly the one conference I go to where everyone I meet is worth meeting. They are all peers or at my sort of level, running a studio, or executives and publishers. The speakers are great, and the networking oppourtunities are amazing.

Darren Jobling: GameHorizon isn't insular. It doesn't presuppose that our industry has all the answers for our industry. It looks at other people to see what we can learn from them.

What can attendees expect to gain from GameHorizon?

Gareth Edmondson: Having been to various conferences, this one is more interesting because it is aimed at an executive level. It's more interesting in terms of what talks are on for people at my level. You really do get something out of listening to other studio managers, or people high-up in Microsoft or Sony or whatever. Everything is set at a much higher level.

Jobling: It sounds bizzare, but GameHorizon is an uplifting experience. I always walk out of there a lot more upbeat an optimistic than I was when I walked in. That's two-pronged as well, firstly you get to talk to and hear from other companies facing the same issues as you are, so you know you are not alone. Secondly, a lot of solutions are bandied around. There is no pessimism when like-minded people are working together.

Prytherch: I like to go to conferences that are

inspirational, and promote tangental thoughts. GameHorizon has always given me that. That the speakers come from both within and without of the classical games development industry, and they are always inspirational. Last year we had Richard St. John, and that was probobly one of the most memorable talks that I have ever been to. He came on after lunch when everyone was full and tired, and before long everyone was on their seats.

Jobling: This year we have people like Mark Schulman, who has been the drummer with various bands like Velvet Revolver and is currently drumming on Pink's UK tour, and I think that you can guarantee that no other European games conference will have people like him coming in from other industries and talking.

Cunliffe: The conference gives executive level people the chance to take time out of the office. It's not just about networking, it's also about the chance to find out what is going on in the future of the industry. It lets executives think about what direction they want to take their companies in over the next few years. You don't really get to think about that kind of thing when you are in the thick of developing a game, so it kind of allows for some time out.

How is this year's event tailored to reflect current trends and challenges in the industry? For instance, has a theme been set?

Cunliffe: Well GameHorizon is always forward-thinking. The three main areas we always look at – which are quite broad – are the future of the industry in terms of technology, the future of the industry in terms of business models, and content.

This year you will see that there is quite a diverse set of talks. It's as if the industry is sort of being split into two halves. You still have a lot of interest in the high-end graphics and triple-A titles, but we are also seeing a lot of the social and casual games coming up and making a lot of money. The industry seems to be becoming split between those two areas.

Jobling: The event looks at stuff like transactions and social gaming and that sort of thing. It was quite a considerable time before most other people picked that up. We look at what is going on in social gaming, and how that applies to what others are doing currently in the console market. We look at the oppourtunities there – there has been talk already about digital distribution, but what are people doing now?

Prytherch: Talking briefly there about the music industry, personally I think that they handled the transition into digital distribution really badly. It will be interesting for me, in general, to hear the lessons they believe that they have learnt from that. We can learn from their mistakes.

What is everyone looking forward to the most at this year's event?

Cunliffe: There is a guy called Jesse Schell, who is CEO of Schell Games. I am particularly looking forward to him because he did an absolutely amazing talk at the DICE summit earlier this year. His talk at GameHorizon is called 'Roadmap to the Game Apocalypse', and he will really be digging deeper into the issues that he discussed at DICE, looking at how games are going to impact our everyday life in the future. I think that is going to be really interesting. I am really excited about that one myself.

Edmondson: Peter Molyneux is always interesting, isn't he? It's always a rollercoster with him, and one that I look forward to.

Ed Bartlett: I'm most looking forward to Tom Rothenberg, from the McCann Erickson ad agency. They handle all of the marketing for Microsoft and Xbox, as well as everything for Peter Molyneux. I think a lot of the developers and independents that are coming through now are starting to understand the need to consider the marketing aspect in their appeal to consumers – even from the concept stage. I think marketing is important from then all the way up to the publishers, and I don't feel that you see enough people talking about that at development conferences. I think we will see some wide-eyes when they show some of the work that they have been doing there. That company has always been pretty cutting-edge with that.

> ***"One of the really interesting things will be how the likes of Bigpoint, with 110m players, plans to do battle against IP-rich rivals like EA."***
>
> Darren Jobling, Eutechnyx

Prytherch: I'm also looking forward to Tom's talk. The marketing angle doesn't appeal to me so much, but there is also a guy called Scott Foe who has a varied background in creating a wide variety of games. He also writes an active blog on the web as well, which is very interesting reading.

Cunliffe: Apparently he's been called the 'Tarantino of the games industry'. I'm not massively sure what that means, but he is a bit 'out there'.

Jobling: I'm excited about Mark Schulman, the drummer. I've heard him speak before and he always has something interesting and relevent to say. The stakes are on as well to see if, as the motivational speaker, he can be as popular as Richard St. John. His drum kit is definitely going to be amazing!

Cunliffe: Someone else who has confirmed recently, actually, and was excellent on a panel last year, is Nils Holger-Henning from Bigpoint Games. Bigpoint are one of the biggest web browser game companies, and he will be talking about new business models and new technology, so that should be very interesting. People can definitely learn from the kind of huge success which they have had.

Bartlett: They did some amazing stuff with the TV networks in Germany. They used some of the free air space on the cable channels to broadcast the games that were being played online and use that as reciprocal marketing.

MEET THE BOARD

Carri Cunliffe
Conference Director, GameHorizon Conference

Simon Prytherch
CEO, Lightning Fish

Darren Jobling
Biz Dev Director, Eutechnyx

Gareth Edmondson
Studio Manager, Ubisoft Reflections

Ed Bartlett
VP Publisher Relations – Europe, IGA

George Bain
Developer Relations Account Manager, SCEE

Mark Carrigan
Gateshead City Council

From that they have been partly aquired by NBC, the big network in America. They've done some incredible things.

Jobling: One of the really interesting things will be how the likes of Bigpoint, with their 110m registered players, plans to do battle against their rivals in the likes of EA who own a lot of IP – I think that is going to be really interesting as well.

Why was Gateshead selected as a location for GameHorizon?

Mark Carrigan: From the council's perspective, we have long been a supporter of arts, creativity and culture. We built the Angel of the North here, we have a huge regeneration stratergy in place cetered around buildings and the creative industries in Gateshead. We have a designated business centre called the International Business Centre which is home to a lot of start-ups.

Above: The Sage, Gateshead is the location for the GameHorizon conference

Obviously we are delighted that we have the likes of Eutechnyx here, plus Atomhawk, and we are soon to have an international online games developer moving to Gateshead as well.

Part of the regeneration stratergy is to build a section designated the 'Creative Quarter', where we are building something called the Northern Design Centre which is all about housing digital and creative businesses. We are really working to bolster the economy with creativity, and games are at the forefront of our minds. We look forward to helping more start-ups and encouraging collaboration along the way as well.

Jobling: A lot of people come up to Gateshead for the first time with a lot of negative, preconcieved ideas, and we have been a little lucky that so far every time we have held the conference the weather has been great. An American attendee came to me last year and told me he thought it was better in Gateshead than in the south of France.

Obviously there is also a big cluster of game developers here that have developed naturally. GameHorizon is a great, big network connected to all the other related networks in that field. It is where GameHorizon is naturally based. The council here is also very forward-thinking. Everything that people associate with Newcastle actually belongs to Gateshead, the Angel of the North, the Baltic, the Millenium Bridge, the Metro Centre and The Sage are all owned by Gateshead.

Cunliffe: We always have lots and lots of positive feedback from people about the activities and facilities in Gateshead, the cultural aspect, you're right next to the Baltic art gallery, everybody always says there are wonderful facilities. It's a great place.

Carrigan: If any developers are interested in setting up a business or seeing what sort of support is available from Gateshead Council, I would be delighted if they wanted to contact me at markcarrigan@gateshead.gov.uk.

Prytherch: From the perspective of someone who lives in the Midlands and travels to Newcastle and Gateshead a few times a year, including for the conference, I can say that it really is, and I don't mean any offense by this, but it is shockingly beautiful. It is just a really high-quality location.

What does everyone see as the key challenges and opportunities effecting the games industry today?

Bartlett: The industry has gone through a weird transition in the past ten to 15 years, it became huge overnight and now has compressed again, consolodation has happened and a lot of new platforms have come out and have flourished with the online market and digital distribution and so on. Now there is a great oppourtunity for people to flesh-out that ecosystem and find new niches that can be filled with interesting content, and there are a lort of challenges in doing that all from scratch once again.

Look at all the people who have suddenly appeared from nowhere, like Moshi Monsters for example, who have become a huge, talked-about franchise from nothing.

In the past a lot of people have created games because it appeals to them, but now a lot of people are creating commercial prospects with games, and there are a lot of opportunities for that kind of development for the industry.

Jobling: The key challenge is obviously the change that is coming along for the traditional console-style developers. However, that change is very much going to be a good thing. Console developers can really focus on console quality in the near future, looking into things like the free-play market, which we will be specifically looking into at the conference as well.

> ***"We are really working to bolster the economy in Gateshead with creative firms, and games are at the forefront of that."***
>
> Mark Carrigan, Gateshead City Council

Cunliffe: Yes, we have a panel on that. Mark Rein and Nicholas Lovell are in it. They will be looking at the kind of high-end graphics that consoles are using compared to the casual gaming platforms and social games and so on that use lower end graphics and focus more on content.

Bartlett: People need to look at the risks that will be appearing during the transition to online and digital distribution. There will be a natural fall-off of mainstream consumers as people are unable to access certain content or platforms because they don't have the right technology or connection speed, whatever it is. There will be an oppourtunity for people to create new content there to fill those gaps as well.

Jobling: For the first time ever venture capitalists and other sources of finance are really interested in what we are up to. You'll see a lot of analysts, reserchers and the like coming along. For the first time ever they are expressing a real interest in the games themselves.

Prytherch: Everything is moving over from retail to digital distribution, and this isn't a quick process. Many consumers will still only buy retail disks, so for us the key challenge is finding a balance between the two things, discussing digital downloads and retail distribution for publishers as well.

Edmondson: Having worked in the games industry for a number of years, we have gotten really used to change. Change is just part of what we do all the time, because the industry changes so dramatically and so often. The change and the challenges that are occurring at the moment are just a part of our natural evolution, which are creating oppourtunities and forcing us to think differently and for the better.

The games industry has always been really good at that anyway. We haven't always been a console and disk-based industry, for example. Change is what we do.

Prytherch: One of the main changes is that developers who have been producing games that get launched and then forgotten about are changing from that development model into a service model. Providing a service is something totally different, that is something that will be going on for years to come. A lot of developers aren't geared up for that, but are trying to change their business internally to prepare to take that on.

Jobling: That's true, but that is a very similar issue to when games went from 2D to 3D graphics. The difference is that now there are that many more people involved. We still have to look at the new skills required and the new people we need to get on board, it's just for a different reason.

Will casual gaming platforms like the iPhone, and browser-based online games ever compete graphically with current generation console gaming?

Prytherch: Why do they need to compete? Most people don't play a game for that, or at least not that alone. Certainly that is not why people play *FarmVille*. As long as the graphics appropriately represent what they are doing, these people care more about the social aspect of gameplay.

Bartlett: If you think about *Farmville*, that kind of a game really wouldn't benefit from a *Super Mario Galaxy*-style of control and view setup. It would be unessesarry, so I agree with Simon on that point.

Edmondson: People are always going to want to exploit hardware as much as they can anyway. There will be improvements in the visual quality of the handheld stuff, but there will always be a place for the simple pick-up-and-play titles. There is room for both.

Jobling: Certain games can gain something from high-end graphics, but there are others where nothing is added to the experience.

Find out more about the conference at www.gamehorizonconference.com

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Who's Speaking?

Traditional Games Breaking into Social Networks: A View from the Frontline
Louis Castle - CEO, Instant Action Inc.

KEYNOTE

"I have been attempting to free the games industry from the shackles of bricks and mortar and democratizing music games in the process. I'm looking forward to sharing my experiences at Evolve."

Gamification: How Games are Everywhere
David Helgason - CEO, Unity Technologies

KEYNOTE

"I'll be talking about how games are everywhere and, more importantly, how we can use them to conquer untapped markets. I'm looking forward to coming to Evolve and sharing some of the discoveries we've made with Unity."

Working with WiiWare: From Student Developers to Swords and Soldiers
Jasper Koning, Ronimo Games

Hats, Loops and Levers: Experiences of a small studio
Simon Oliver, Hand Circus

The iPhone developers' conference call
Alan Yu, ngmoco

Yesterday's games designers - tomorrow's social tech innovators
Gabe Zichermann, beamME

Technical perspectives on the evolution of SingStar from game to service on PlayStation®3
Richard Bates, Sony Computer Entertainment Europe

Other Speakers at the Develop Conference include: Activision • BioWare • Channel 4 • Crytek • Disney Black Rock Studios • Electronic Arts • Eurogamer • Lionhead Studios • Microsoft • Team 17 and many more...

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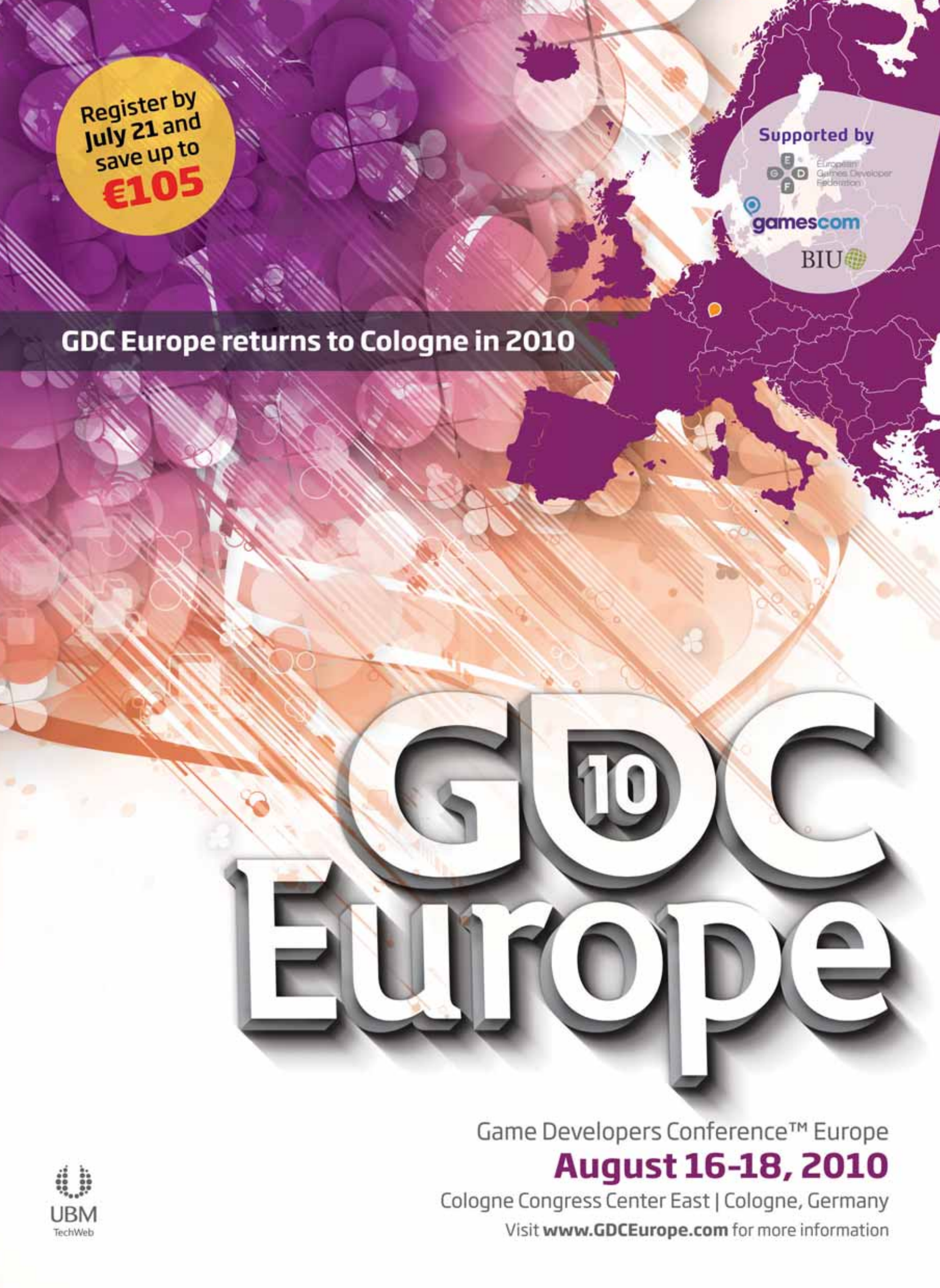
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FACIAL ANIMATION: Cubic Motion

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Gone to Iceland

Two special pieces looking at how CCP is harnessing the power of third-party technology for EVE, p47 and p50

Setting the **Cubes** in motion

In a follow-up to last month's in-depth facial animation focus, Cubic Motion tells **Will Freeman** why adaptable pipelines can help developers achieve better results with more efficiency…

Last issue *Develop* took a long look at the evolution of the facial animation sector, and the myriad techniques jostling for developers' attention. In what is one of the most technologically diverse specialties, marker-based systems compete with video capture technology and the talent of hand animators, and each method has its own distinct pros and cons.

However, in speaking with Cubic Motion's chief executive Gareth Edwards, it's clear that while selecting the right means to the ends is of key concern for those undertaking facial animation, the debate over which method is best is perhaps of secondary importance to choosing how to handle any cocktail of approaches.

"Cubic Motion believes the key to overall efficiency is to embrace the idea of adaptable pipelines tailored to each project," explains Edwards, who joined Cubic Motion in 2009 after a break from his time at Image Metrics, which he founded. "On a game development project of a reasonable size, it's better to invest slightly more time in getting the pipeline right, in the context of what the production needs, rather than decide on some particular technology up front and attempt to fit everything around it."

Left: The Cubic Motion team uses a network of interacting systems to produce facial animation. Above: Its head office in Daresbury

YOU DO THE MATH

Cubic Motion pitches its offering as a meta-system, which provides an open framework for combining animation sub-task algorithms. Instead of championing a single approach, Edwards and his team produce facial animation through a network of interacting systems woven together with principled mathematical concepts. A typical example would be the firm's data-fusion system, which splices a trio of independent feeds combining mo-cap data and video.

While Cubic Motion does handle entire facial animation projects outsourced to it by developers, it also works to support teams keen to keep the creative process within the walls of their studio, which is where offering an adaptive and tailoured pipeline comes in. Edwards and his colleagues boast years of highly specialised experience, and it is that understanding that lets them support animators still struggling with emerging technology.

"Wherever we see systems that aren't delivering, it's usually because the team violated the rule, well-known in software development but not always applied to building animation pipelines, to optimise at the end," explains Edwards.

"For example, you sometimes see teams fretting about whether to use a capture system accurate to, say one or two millimeter, before they've even settled on the character rigs, when in most cases getting the rig right or wrong outweighs the impact of choosing one or the other capture system. It's easy to invest in the wrong place if you don't consider the whole pipeline."

> ***"The industry is getting better at facial animation. This is driving unit costs down and increasing developers' capacity for high-quality character animation in their games."***

In fact, Edwards highlights character rigging as potentially more important than any other part of the pipeline. After all, it's those rigs that drive much of the animation in game, and any performance capture is ultimately expressed through that rig.

"The key is to be aware of the mechanism by which capture data is expressed through a rig; it's no good simply coming up with something that can hit all the shapes by some magical – and unfathomable – combination of controls."

Edwards and his co-workers clearly respect the role of the human touch, and according to the sector veteran, facial animation and automated rigging technologies should provide a compliment to rigging artists, providing support rather than offering an alternative.

WE ARE THE MODS

The modular system for the assembly algorithmic components implemented by Cubic Motion might sound like a lot of work, as adaptive pipelines effectively entail the creation of a new approach for every project, but Edwards and his team are confident their approach is notably rapid and efficient.

Looking to the future, Edwards has a positive perspective – he sees trends affecting the entire industry as a defining factor: "One of the unknowns of the next few years is how facial animation, like many other sub-activities of development, will split between outsourcing and in-house work. We expect them to co-exist for many years to come.

"One certainty is that the industry is getting much better at facial animation. This is driving unit costs down and increasing developers' capacity for extensive, high-quality character animation in their game."

www.cubicmotion.com

Dust 514 is an MMO-FPS hybrid by CCP

CCP Developing a genre mash-up using UNREAL ENGINE 3

CCP's *Dust 514* is an MMO and first-person shooter hybrid for consoles that will be set in the same deep universe as *Eve Online*; the developer's long-established PC game that has become a staple of the genre.

Developed for Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3, *Dust 514* allows players of both games to interact seamlessly across platforms. If that sounds ambitious, that's because it is – nothing of its kind has ever been attempted.

CCP's decision to use Unreal Engine 3 was based on Epic's reputation, speed and functionality.

"We needed to provide our development team with a solid foundation to work from, an engine that allows rapid prototyping and iteration of our core FPS mechanics," said Atli Már Sveinsson, creative director of *Dust 514*.

"With the scope of certain elements of the game, such as terrain size and lighting, we needed an engine that was agile enough to provide quick iteration within the provided framework. Combining that flexibility with the fact that the Unreal Engine has been battletested by some of the greatest titles ever crafted, made Unreal Engine 3 the absolute best choice for us."

The team members at CCP and at Epic Games China worked collaboratively, creating a strong relationship from start to finish.

According to Sveinsson, hands down, accessibility of knowledge was Epic's greatest asset. Unreal's long-standing reputation for excellence and convenience has produced a multitude of seasoned users, including members of its own development team. The Unreal Developer Network (UDN), with its various mailing lists and access to the talented engineers and artists at Epic Games China gave it an edge, allowing CCP to train its team quickly on how to use the tools and hit the ground running.

Paul Meegan, Epic Games China's CEO, leads efforts to make sure that Epic's licensees can walk through a process in a way that's efficient and fast.

"We found Epic's licensing process to be outstanding, starting with a tremendous level of support during CCP's evaluation stage," said Thor Gunnarsson, CCP's vice president of business development.

"The *Dust 514* team in CCP's Shanghai office was able to prototype and iterate early proof of concept with close proximity to, and support from the Epic Games China team, which proved to be invaluable. As we completed this phase and moved to commercial licensing, confidence and trust in the working relationship was cemented, leading to a rapid and streamlined commercial licensing pipeline." Continued Thor Gunnarsson.

In just six months, dynamic lighting and massive mega terrains were implemented in *Dust 514* due to the standardising on Unreal Engine 3 that gives CCP's development team the time and flexibility to focus on perfecting the optimal client-side engine and pipeline to fully realise its creative and artistic vision.

With its own core technology platform, CCP created a fully scalable and persistent online gaming experience that meets both the visual, technical and creative demands for *Dust 514*.

"Unreal Engine 3, which complements and integrates easily with our own technology, provides CCP with precisely the sort of elegant solution we favour. Having a proven framework for consoles supporting our first venture into that genre allows the *Dust 514* developers to focus their time, talent and energy squarely on making an incredible game," said CCP's CEO Hilmar Veigar Petursson.

For more information about CCP or DUST 514, please visit www.ccp.com or www.dust514.org

UPCOMING EPIC ATTENDED EVENTS:

E3 2010
Los Angeles, CA
June 15th to 17th, 2010

Develop
Brighton, UK
July 13th to 15th, 2010

Gamescom
Cologne, Germany
August 18th to 22nd, 2010

Please email: mrein@epicgames.com for appointments.

To discuss anything raised in this column or general licensing opportunities for Epic Games' *Unreal* engine, contact: **mrein@epicgames.com**

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Mark Rein is vice president of Epic Games based in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since 1992 Mark has worked on Epic's licensing and publishing deals, business development, public relations, academic relations, marketing and business operations.
www.epicgames.com

HEARD ABOUT

Battlefield Bad Company 2

John Broomhall talks to EA DICE's audio ace, Stefan Strandberg…

DEVELOPER:
Dice

PUBLISHER:
Electronic Arts

AUDIO TEAM:
Audio Director: Stefan Strandberg
Sound Design: Bence Pajor, Mari Saastamoinen, Ben Minto, Stefan Strandberg, Olof Strömqvist
Original Music: Mikael Karlsson
Dialogue Direction: Olof Strömqvist

Even down the line from Sweden, you can just tell Stefan Strandberg is oozing with an infectious enthusiasm and passion for audio in games. He says it like it is, his candour marking a man and his audio team who are confident but not cocky about their vision and ability to deliver it. With the first *Battlefield Bad Company* in the bag, they had already been there and bought the t-shirt in some style. *BC2* gave them the time and opportunity to build on a solid foundation and start pushing the boundaries in some surprising new ways.

Strandberg says: "As with any sequel, we dug deeper, expanding diversity and asset quality. The game plays better – both single and multi-player – and a game that plays better, sounds better. We've gotten out of the audio rooms and worked with other disciplines more collaboratively. For example, if you want to make something louder, sometimes pushing up the volume slider isn't enough. So we went to the FX artists and said, 'look, the explosions won't feel dangerous if we don't shake the camera,' and in an unusual development, we audio guys ended up controlling the camera shake so we could ensure perfect synchronisation. In fact, not only do we trigger and control the shaking x, y and z parameters from the audio engine, we also trigger rumbling of the joypad. It's all done subtly but it makes the explosions seem louder – it's like we've got more dimensions to work in."

This 'perception illusion' of audio-driven camera shake and rumble now features throughout, in situations ranging from say the fairly obvious instance of a tank drive-by through to more oblique examples like a parachute-opening, all to great effect. Strandberg adds: "It really amplifies key moments – with Destruction 2.0 you can bring down a whole house and so a couple of seconds before it collapses, you'll hear the building starting to creak and moan and the camera starts shaking and the pad starts rumbling – all in complete sync. It's what creates that, 'I gotta get out of here,' reaction. Audio alone is not as powerful. It has been one of the best things we've ever done and we'll develop it further in the future."

Another area of improvement has been tweaking the HDR dynamic mixing system as featured in *Develop* previously. Although Strandberg is playing his cards close to his chest on this one, he does offer the following: "I will say we've been working on making the overall sound easier on the ear – kind of shinier. I was a little tired of the super-noisy soundscape, so coming to this project we reset our ears and started listening afresh to *BC1*, recording the outputs and conducting some analysis."

> ***"As with any sequel, we dug deeper, expanding diversity and asset quality. The game plays better – and a game that plays better, sounds better."***
>
> Stefan Strandberg, Dice

This process led to the realisation that there was much more dynamic range to use in the lower regions resulting in the team adding significant amounts of bass – a key factor in the in-game delivery of some new weapon assets arising from a quite extraordinary gun wrangling and recording session in LA and Fort Irwin (complete with mocked-up Iraqi village).

"I think it's the biggest gun recording ever attempted – a joint venture with the *Medal of Honor* team. For two days we had movie guys Jean Paul Fasal and Brian Watkins there with an 80 microphone set-up capturing every weapon sound you can imagine to both computer and analogue tape recorders. We even had people sync-recording in the mountains five-kilometers away. The resulting ProTools sessions allow you to create any kind of weapon sound you like, though the portrait of the tail is a constant, which is why we still like to use 'guerrilla' recordings we make during the military exercises that take place around Stockholm periodically. Running around the forest with shotgun mics – recording from the hip – also yields some fantastic assets.

"So you update your libraries and find stuff you just love and you think, 'this one sound changes everything.' Then you adapt other audio to work with that sound – it's like you've found the Rosetta Stone. For instance, we got a much bassier recording of a machine gun and used it at different pitches to homogenise a lot of the weapons. It really helps to create iconical differences between assault rifles and machine guns.

"In fact, we've worked very closely with design to make sure there are small sonically unique identifiers for everything in the game providing important audio cues which will improve you as a soldier. Though they're not mentioned in the manual, it's cool how people pick up on them – it's all part of the gameplay depth.

"It's great we had more time to do these things – a year-and-a-half. Last time around we were building a new engine at the same time as making a game which is horrible. We were able to just polish – and when everybody is polishing, what it brings to the product is amazing."

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UNITYFOCUS

Getting there first: Unity's zero-day iPad support

With Apple's new iPad set to revitalise the app gaming landscape, **Thomas Grové** explains how Unity is ready to support every developer's needs…

The benefits of using Unity as a development platform extend past its elegant user interface and workflow.

When you decide to use Unity, you're not only investing your time into a tool that supports the most interesting platforms to currently develop for from a technological and market place stand point, but also the most interesting and viable platforms of the future as well.

This was the case earlier last month with the advent of the iPad. Unity's crack team of engineers got iPad support up and running, and into beta testers' hands, soon after the iPad dev tools were released. Beta testing continued up until the day before the iPad launched in the United States, at which point Unity Technologies released *Unity iPhone 1.7* to its userbase – a free upgrade which enables iPad publishing.

On launch day there were more than 20 Unity authored iPad games in the App Store, adding to the more than 600 Unity iPhone games already published. Publishers of these new apps included notable names like Disney, Warner Bros, and Chillingo.

AUTHOR ONCE, DEPLOY ANYWHERE… AGAIN

'Author once, deploy anywhere' is a trend that isn't going to stop. The ability to repurpose your existing games, while altering them to make the most of the target platform, just makes too much sense. Because of this, Unity is quickly becoming one of the few tools that the industry is standardising on. Developers are able to use their familiarity with the Unity editor to create titles efficiently and then redeploy to new platforms as they become available.

Many of the iPad launch titles fit into this paradigm; just before the iPad launch I asked two launch title developers about the experience of using Unity to deploy to unreleased hardware.

FEATURE HIGHLIGHTS OF UNITY IPHONE 1.7

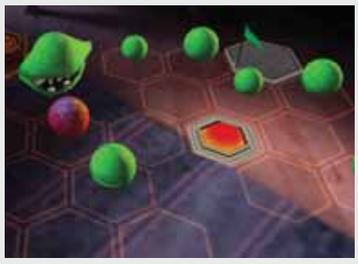
- Free iPad deployment for users of Unity iPhone.
- iPad Simulator support – developers can create iPad apps, even if they do not yet have iPad hardware.
- Universal application support – apps can be designed to automatically work on iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch.

For more information about using Unity to create games for mobile, console, and the web, visit unity3d.com

INTERVIEW: MONSTER BALL CO-CREATOR THOMAS HENTSCHEL LUND

What games are you releasing?
We are releasing part of our back catalogue: two Objective-C games (*Smack Boxing* and *Touch Wars*) as well as a Unity game – *Monster Ball*.

Have they been submitted/ accepted to the app store?
All three have gone through the pre-acceptance with approval for the grand launch, and were submitted last night as final versions. So baring any unknown issues, we should have those in the app store on Saturday to coincide with the iPad launch.



How was your experience developing an iPad app with Unity iPhone?
Our experience is best described by comparing the process required for the Objective-C games and the Unity game. For the two Objective-C games we spent days re-rendering all of the art, then we had to run through the entire code and pixel push things in place. It was super boring work and took man-days to complete.

With our Unity game it was literally just a matter of setting up a few player preference parameters and hitting build. The Unity GUI system already took care of aspect ratio changes, so the iPad port was simple, pain free and it just worked. Once again the investment of using Unity has paid off.

INTERVIEW: SEWERYN 'YONEK' PANCZYNIAK, LEAD PROGRAMMER AT INFINITE DREAMS

What games are you releasing?
iQuarium HD, Sailboat Championship PRO HD, and *Jelly Invaders HD* – all of which are Unity authored games.

Have they been submitted/ accepted to the app store?
Yes, all of these games were submitted and accepted. The mail from Apple told us that the games will be available at launch.

How was your experience developing an iPad app with Unity iPhone?
The experience was great. It took us something around half an hour to run the first build in the iPad simulator and then probably a day to setup everything for HD. We were able to get our games submitted and accepted to the iPad App Store without ever seeing hardware. With Unity it just works.

A Wwise choice

When renowned developer CCP upgraded its audio tech for flagship MMO EVE Online it chose Audiokinetic's Wwise. **John Broomhall** talks to audio director Baldur J Baldursson, sound engineer/composer Jon Hallur Haraldsson and audio programmer Andri Mar Jonsson to find out why...

EVE is more than a game – it's a worldwide phenomenon. Set tens of thousands of years in the future, critically-acclaimed *EVE Online* is a breathtaking journey to the stars for adventure, riches, danger and glory. The game features a vast player-run economy where your greatest asset is the starship, designed to accommodate your specific needs, skills and ambitions. *EVE* offers you professions ranging from commodities-trader to mercenary; industrial entrepreneur to pirate; mining engineer to battle-fleet commander – or any combination. From brokering business deals to waging war, *EVE* provides a diverse array of sophisticated tools and interfaces with which to forge your own destiny.

EVE stats are mind-blowing – over 300,000 subscribers (and still counting) and at peak, more than 50,000 concurrent players co-operating in their thousands to undertake huge group battles, vying for control of *EVE's* 5,000-plus solar systems. A typical player might be a 27-year-old male college student or white-collar professional, logging 20 hours' play per week. An impressive 20 per cent of all *EVE* subscribers become 'life-time' players.

EVE's developer and publisher is industry-leading pioneer of single-server persistent universe architecture, CCP. Privately owned and founded in Reykjavik, Iceland (whose population size is about the same as *EVE's*) in 1997, CCP has over 400 employees with satellite offices in Atlanta, Shanghai and London. Audio director Baldur Baldursson sums up the mission: "Utilising a cross-discipline approach, combining cutting-edge technology and artistic excellence, CCP is dedicated to providing vibrant, compelling products that transcend the boundaries of conventional MMOs and facilitate social networking through virtual worlds. *EVE Online* is designed to foster experiences unattainable in any other form of media, where true human interaction and human emotions can be shared and experienced in a living and evolving world."

> ***"The first thing that caught my attention with Wwise was the slick interface and how cleverly everything seemed to be laid out. Somehow it felt very familiar."***
>
> Baldur Baldursson, CCP

MIDDLEWARE TECHNOLOGY

Part of CCP's modus operandi is to strategically tap into middleware technology with a view to keeping more in-house time and energy available for game-making and caretaking their massive virtual world. Baldursson explains why a switch of audio technology had become necessary and why the team chose Audiokinetic's WWise: "We had a mixed bag of technologies handling audio and it required a clean-up. As part of that process, we needed to find a solution that could serve all our audio needs. Rather than bear the cost of considerably enlarging our audio department to write a brand new audio engine, we quickly realised the middleware path would work well. We looked at various options and when we researched Audiokinetic we liked what we saw. Meeting and working with them, learning first-hand how knowledgeable and responsive they were, served to assure us they were the best choice for *EVE*.

"It was very useful to be able to download Wwise and have a play with it. Having the complete tool enabled me, as a content creator, to see exactly what it was capable of before making a commitment. I would even go so far as to say it was a prime factor in our decision to go with Wwise – alongside comparing notes with other audio professionals. The first thing that caught my attention with Wwise was the slick interface and how cleverly everything seemed to be laid out. Somehow it felt very familiar. After experiencing the demo, we set the requirement that other middleware had to at least come close to this."

Audio programmer Andri Mar Jonsson takes up the story: "The migration process went fairly well. Of course there were a few kinks, but overall it's been an enjoyable experience. At first, when I heard the sentence, 'Oh, we want a new sound system in *EVE* in three months using only two programmers and two sound engineers who had never used Wwise in a production environment I wasn't very optimistic – so I'm very pleased how quickly it all fell into place. There were a few, mostly architecturally-related problems since Wwise abstracts things a lot better than our previous solutions. For example, the minor but surprisingly difficult problem of trying to convince our programmers they would no longer be playing files – they would be

EVE's epic space setting has attracted as many players as its developer's home nation

sending events and that would be the only thing they needed to worry about.

"Email support from Audiokinetic was very good and the software stable and bug-free. I have never had the authoring tool crash on me, for instance. Once things are up and running, it works without a hitch and takes almost everything we throw at it. This has built up trust with the programmers, meaning they waste less time searching for a bug in the engine – experience has shown them that in 99 per cent of cases, it's in their code.

"We found Wwise was struggling at high load points to start with but that was before we read about stuff like virtual voices. After discovering and implementing some of those features, along with limiting sounds in a certain group or bus, things improved a lot. All-in-all, after discovering the tweaking knobs of Wwise, we have been very pleased with its performance."

MMO HEADACHE

Clearly, audio is a vitally important part of the *EVE* experience but MMOs provide some specific audio development headaches as sound engineer and composer, Jon Hallur Haraldsson explains: "Being a somewhat young genre and, in the case of *EVE*, very open and non-linear, there are quite a few challenges for us. As we use over-the-internet delivery of the content, we have to be very selective of each kilobyte we ship. Also, with the sandbox nature of the game, a player might find himself spending a lot of time in the same place, repeating the same actions, seeing the same atmosphere. The human ear is very sensitive to repetition but the content has to be kept relatively small. This is also an issue with the music. The nature of the game makes it hard to determine danger levels and the length of conflicts, so creating a concrete system for music playback that underpins the experience can be quite difficult."

Baldursson continues: "For regular single player games you can design audio almost without worrying about repetition – most people play the game only once and for those who keep on playing for two or three months, it's no big deal hearing the same sound a few times. In an MMO we have to be careful in designing sounds in such a way that people don't get too tired hearing them over and over, month after month. We may have to sacrifice some cool sound effects created in the design phase simply because they don't stand up to repetition. Wwise makes things a little easier by allowing us to randomly select a sound say, from a list of eight sounds, and then randomly alter the pitch and high-pass filter."

On this note, Haraldsson said: "The ability to randomise almost every parameter in Wwise is awesome – also the logic system used with the state engine, blend containers and so on. The internal logic part of Wwise enables content creators to do extremely complex state management without using any code. If used properly, the event and logic system can become a programming language of sorts, accessible by the content creators. Also, being able to test things without having to actually integrate them into the game itself is immensely helpful."

Faced with their perennial repetition issue, the team have been exploring SoundSeed, an interactive sound generator for Wwise which uses innovative DSP technology to greatly reduce memory usage while facilitating rich dynamic audio content. By creating an unlimited number of variations from a single 'footprint' sound, SoundSeed Impact enables audio developers to get tons more variation for resonant sound effects in a memory-efficient and cost-effective way.

Baldursson: "So far it looks like SoundSeed can make a lot of difference for us. It may actually add a new layer of creativity, allowing for a new type of sound design – a design that happens within the tool itself. This will benefit everyone, especially the end user who will experience more variety. If we didn't have to worry about memory usage we probably wouldn't have noticed SoundSeed in the first place. Its main advantage for us is technical and concerns the use of RAM. For example, we can use only one gun sound waveform for a particular type of gun instead of five to ten. Multiply this with all the sounds where this is possible and we may be saving huge amounts of precious RAM. It looks like SoundSeed can save us some considerable time and money once we get it up and running in *EVE*, and our sound design methods are geared towards the use of it."

For Baldursson and his team, choosing Audiokinetic's technology has clearly been a positive experience, with the promise of it yielding yet more production efficiencies and benefits in the months to come. The investment in Wwise has been well worth it as he concludes: "The first phase of implementing the tools and technology into both our own systems and way of thought has required some extra effort. What this means though is that from now on we won't have to rely on a programmer for almost anything we do for audio in our games. This was one of the main reasons we decided to go this route in the first place and we are already using Wwise on another product in development right now."

Interactive Dialogue – An Approach to Structure

Heavy Rain has highlighted the strength detailed dialogue can provide to a game's narrative, **Steve Ince** offers up a best practice guide for implementing interactive conversations in your game…

With the success of *Heavy Rain*, narrative is once again thrust to the forefront of game development. Like casual and social gaming have recently done in their own areas of the gaming spectrum, *Heavy Rain* has broadened the interactive experience in what has traditionally been regarded as the 'hardcore' arena. The lines that define what makes a game have been blurred once more, but what might it mean for developers in general and game writers in particular?

If the industry is to embrace stronger, character-driven narrative without abandoning the heart of what makes a great game – solid gameplay – how might we approach it? How can we structure interactive scenes and dialogue in a way to give the player gameplay control without becoming overwhelmed at the writing stage?

The key to a writer of interactive dialogue keeping control of the writing process and feeding into the game's design and development in a constructive way is twofold. Firstly, a writer should learn to think through the structure of interactive scenes in terms of Boolean variables and secondly, they should abandon all thoughts of dialogue trees.

Although I'm aiming this article primarily at game writers, it is also intended for anyone involved in developing the structure of interactive dialogue scenes. Designers, for instance, may not have the job of writing the dialogue in the scenes, but understanding and working with the structure is important, particularly if they are the ones who need to track down and fix bugs later in the game's production and development.

How much interactive dialogue a game needs or the degree to which it is implemented depends very much on the requirements of the game. This approach to interactive dialogue should always be a part of the overall development with the importance of its role defined by the team's creative leads.

STRUCTURE AND BOOLEAN VARIABLES

For any writers who may not know what a Boolean variable is – perhaps not having any experience in coding at any level – it is a simple variable that has just two values: True or False. The beauty here is that there is no ambiguity, which enables everything to be kept neat and tidy. But, you may ask, how will this help those writers who never go near scripts that contain variables?

> ***"A writer should think through the structure of interactive scenes in terms of Boolean variables and abandon all thoughts of dialogue trees."***

While writers don't need to learn to create logic scripts or step on the development team's toes in this respect, they will find it incredibly helpful to think in this way, not only to keep track of the complex interactions taking place, but also use Booleans as a tool in the creation of the structure.

At the simplest level, the use of Boolean variables can stop multiple characters telling the player character the same piece of information or stop a character repeating dramatic dialogue and diminishing the drama.

One of the problems with developing interactive scenes is that they can quickly become very daunting and may overwhelm writers if they don't have some method of structuring their approach. Yes, be aware of the larger picture, but concentrate on the building blocks themselves in a way that creates that picture.

When approaching any interactive dialogue scene try defining – in terms of Booleans – what the player character knows, what he needs to know, who he has spoken to, what has been discussed, what he has in his inventory and what his goals/objectives are. For example: Has the PC spoken to Mary? Is there a bomb in the inventory? Does the PC have the name of the murder victim?

The dialogue itself will be coloured by story, plot, the agendas of the other characters and whatever sub-plots are taking place, but controlling the information states with Boolean variables will keep the structure manageable. You end up with a lot of variables, but if they are named in ways that make sense it can be easy to track them.

It can be tempting to use variables that increment, but this can cause logic bugs which are difficult to track down and hard to fix. If you had a variable called Bill_Conversation that incremented with each subject discussed, it would only be possible to discuss topics in a specific order or the incrementation and conditional topics will break down and bugs will appear. Forcing a specific order goes against the

whole idea of an interactive dialogue scene and it may as well be a cut scene.

Naming variables based on the purpose they serve and the characters or objects to which they relate enables you to manage a list of them much more easily. If we have three characters in a game: Tom (player character), Dick and Harry, we may have variables named:

```
- Tom_Knows_Banana – he knows he needs a
  banana.
- Dick_Spoken_Banana – Tom has spoken
  to Dick about the banana
- Harry_Spoken_Banana – Tom has spoken
  to Harry about the banana
```

All these variables will start out as False and Tom cannot speak to Dick or Harry about the banana until he knows he needs to do so.

If Tom, through the actions of the player, finds that he needs a banana, we set the Tom_Knows_Banana variable to True. This in turn means that when the player interacts with Dick, say, we can trigger the part of his interactive scene that's conditional on this variable. When Tom has discussed the banana with Dick we set the Dick_Spoken_Banana variable to True. Not only can we use this to stop Tom and Dick talking about the banana again (unless we specifically want them to), it also acts as an information flag that Tom is effectively carrying around with him from this point on.

If the player interacts with Harry, he and Tom can talk about the banana. Tom and Harry may talk before Tom and Dick, but we'll assume that Tom has already spoken to Dick about the banana before talking to Harry. Tom asks Harry about a banana and he then tells Tom that Dick likes fruit and might have one. Because Tom has already spoken to Dick, the variable Dick_Spoken_Banana is True and triggers a nested condition where Tom explains that he already asked Dick. In scripting terms it may look like this:

```
IF((Tom_Knows_Banana == True) &&
(Harry_Spoken_Banana == False))
{
   [Ask Harry about the banana. Harry says
   Dick may have one.]
   IF(Dick_Spoken_Banana == True)
   {
         [Tom says he already asked Dick.]
   }
   Harry_Spoken_Banana = True;
}
```

Obviously, talking about bananas is a very simple example, but even this can get complex if the number of characters increases or the route to getting the information about the banana has additional gameplay complexity. We may, for instance, introduce another interactive character, Sally, who will only say something important after Tom has spoken to both Dick and Harry. This part of Sally's scene is then dependent on both variables Dick_Spoken_ Banana and Harry_Spoken_Banana being set to True.

What you may notice is that although we've potentially created a lot of structure, there is no dialogue. While we establish the structure dialogue is irrelevant – writers can have the fun of creating that at a later stage. In a sense, this has a parallel with the scene creation approach to film scriptwriting, but in terms of game writing it becomes potentially much more complex. A typical film might have around forty scenes but a game may have hundreds.

One particular beauty in this structural approach is that the development team can see the shape that's forming much earlier because they don't have to wait for the dialogue. The gameplay implementation of the interactive scenes can take place before the writer has completed the dialogue, which will likely benefit schedules and milestone targets.

NO DIALOGUE TREES

Some people may think it an absolute necessity to have dialogue trees in order that scenes will be fully interactive, but I find that thinking in terms of dialogue trees is distracting. In seventeen years of developing interactive dialogue scenes I've never used a branching tree structure. I find that the structure I outlined above is far more flexible and enables the writer to think of each discussion topic as a separate building block but linked and perhaps modified by the use of the Boolean variables and what those variables control.

To me it's much clearer when approaching a scene to think of all discussion topics as being at the same level. The availability of the topics is controlled through the script by the Booleans as described above. After discussing a topic the dialogue engine should return back to that same level to enable the player to choose the next topic.

One of the problems of developing dialogue with a tree structure in mind is that there is often the need to copy whole sections of dialogue into new places in the tree in order to get them to trigger in the right way. This strikes me as very clumsy and a huge waste of time. If dialogue needs to be copied and pasted anywhere, then there is likely to be a problem with the scene structure or the system that drives the dialogue.

FURTHER COMPLEXITY

There may be times when the "flat" approach to topics will need to deal with a second layer temporarily. The writer may want to give the player choices that have different outcomes and doesn't want to return to the main level and confuse the issue with topics that don't have an immediate bearing. An interrogation, for example, may throw up critical information that the player character concentrates on until the resultant sub-topics have been exhausted.

This second level of topics is not a tree structure and can best be described as a nested level of topics. It should be thought of in the same "flat" way. In scripting terms you might think of it as a kind of "while loop" where the conversation is held in this level until the condition for release is met, at which point the system should return to the original topic level.

Many games will not have a need for the complexity of multiple levels, but if it is required the team needs to ensure it is built into the dialogue system.

Heavy Rain has proven that games can feature heavily-scripted sequences that change with player inputs

Emotions are a further way to add complexity, particularly if the choices the player makes and the actions of the gameplay have an effect on the emotions of the other characters. If the player has done something to make Dick angry with Tom we may set a Dick_Angry variable to True and create conditional dialogue within the interactive scene that is triggered by this variable. It may be, for instance, that Dick refuses to talk about anything at all while he's Angry with Tom, in which case the player may need to discover a way to placate Dick before he can get the information he needs. Or the player may need to discover another way altogether to get that same information.

As mentioned before, how much complexity you need is dictated by the requirements of the game and how important interactive dialogue is to the experience you want to give the player. Take these ideas and adapt them to your needs.

CONCLUSION

In many ways, approaching the writing of interactive scenes is blurring the boundaries between writing and design, which is not a bad thing. The more they become intertwined the better integrated the story and gameplay will be. The two aspects will marry closely and share a clear vision.

Because Boolean variables can only be True or False, it may seem that there is a danger of losing the spectrum of subtlety. They are not there to define the subtlety, or the lack of such, but control the structure within which the team creates the subtlety. The use of multiple Booleans working together will create its own subtlety, of course, but the real subtlety will always come from the writer knowing the characters well and knowing how they will react to being teased, seduced, and so forth.

The interactive structure is not a substitute for good writing, but a tool that enables the writer and designers to make it work in the best possible way for the player.

Steve Ince is a games writer-designer with 17 years in game development. After 11 years with Revolution Software, Steve turned freelance in 2004. In 2008 he received an award nomination from the Writers' Guild of Great Britain for the game, *So Blonde*.

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TOOLS: Havok MD David O'Meara to leave in June
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SERVICES: Heavy Rain star opens mocap company
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KEY CONTACTS

STUDIOS

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FaceFX	+1.919.727.9624
Stainless Games	jobs@stainlessgames.com

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Studio News

This month: Blitz Games Studio, Kuju, Side & Lightning Fish

NIGEL ROBBINS APPOINTED KUJU CEO

Former MTV networks man Nigel Robbins has been hired as CEO at **Kuju**, while its founders are stepping down to non-exec roles.

Kuju includes a range of studios – Zoë Mode, Vatra, Headstrong and Doublesix – which has slimmed down over recent months.

"Ian and Jonathan are consummate industry professionals and they have led the charge at Kuju magnificently for more than two decades," said chairman Dominic Wheatley.

"It's great for us that they will maintain that close connection, given their in depth knowledge and experience of the company they founded and the industry in which it operates."

Robbins is tasked with growing Kuju's stable of studios and looking at new ways to expand the business.

Robbins was previously the president of MTV Networks Asia Pacific, overseeing over thirty MTV, Nickelodeon and VH1 branded TV, online and digital content services in that region.

www.kuju.com

LIGHTNING FISH EXPANDS

Motion tracking company **Lightning Fish** has announced the appointment of two programmers, Adrian Smith and Karl Mitson.

Both join after recently graduating from Huddersfield University. Adrian holds eighteen months industry experience helping to develop an XBLA tile YoHo Kablammo.

Karl won first place in the UK Imagine Cup.

Both men were part of the team that won second place in the X48: Microsoft XNA GameCamp competition at Derby University.

"I am enjoying working along side the people who have made many of my favourite games," said Adrian.

"At Lightning Fish I am happy to be able to work with the latest games technology." added Karl.

www.lightningfishgames.com

NEW CEO JOINS IDEAWORKS3D

UK mobile gaming firm **Ideaworks3D** has a new CEO: Niall Murphy, co-founder of wi-fi network The Cloud.

He takes over the role from president and CEO Alex Caccia, who will remain at the company as president.

The move follows Ideaworks3D's recent investment round, and the separation of its studio and technology divisions.

"With these developments we've decided to increase the breadth and depth of our management team," says a statement provided to *Mobile Entertainment* by the company.

www.ideaworkslabs.com

WEST AND ZAMPELLA FORM RESPAWN ENTERTAINMENT

Jason West and Vince Zampella have formed a new independent studio called Respawn Entertainment.

The two were ousted as heads from Infinity Ward in early March under accusations of insubordination from parent company Activision.

They filed a suit against Activision, who filed a counter-claim accusing the pair of, amongst other things, delaying the development of *Modern Warfare 3*.

New outfit Respawn is currently in its formative stages and claim to be "assembling a world-class team of designers, artists and engineers".

The studio's exec team get to keep the IP they make, and EA Partners gets distribution rights to all Respawn's future games.

www.respawn.com

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Moving on up

Our monthly focus on a rising star in games development who has recently taken a new role

John Nash, Develop Q&A

Studio Design Director, Blitz Games Studios

Qualified as a professional Illustrator from Falmouth School of Art & Design, migrated to the games industry in 1993. Served a seven-year stint at Rare. Reporting to the Studio CTO, his current title of Studio Design Director sees him responsible for the Studio's design department as part of the Studio Development Group.

Q) What to you hope to achieve in your new role at Blitz Games Studios?
With the combined efforts of the designers and senior managers I hope to empower people at the studio to design great new game experiences with the least amount of hassle. I want Blitz to be recognised as a centre of design quality and innovation. I'm a man with a plan – let's see if it works!

Q) Where would you like to be in five years?
I will still be at the sharp end of game creation and hopefully helping more game developers experience the exhilaration of being part of a productive team that achieves multi-million selling games. I also have worked out a few new approaches to communicating complex design and I would hope to have proven these and be sharing my findings with the games community as a whole.

Q) What excites you about the video games industry and why?
Maybe it's our collective ability to create new experiences conceived in our imaginations or the even continual tussle between technological innovation and game design. In the end though, there is little downside to working in the fastest growing, most desirable sector of modern mass-market entertainment – I am (we are) lucky indeed.

Q) What advice would you have for people hoping to emulate your success?
Works hard, learn everything, share knowledge and above all else, bring something of you to the party. I also learned early on in my career to always aim high, to always shoot for the stars. Most importantly for designers though, in order to achieve innovation, you have to 'be' the innovation.

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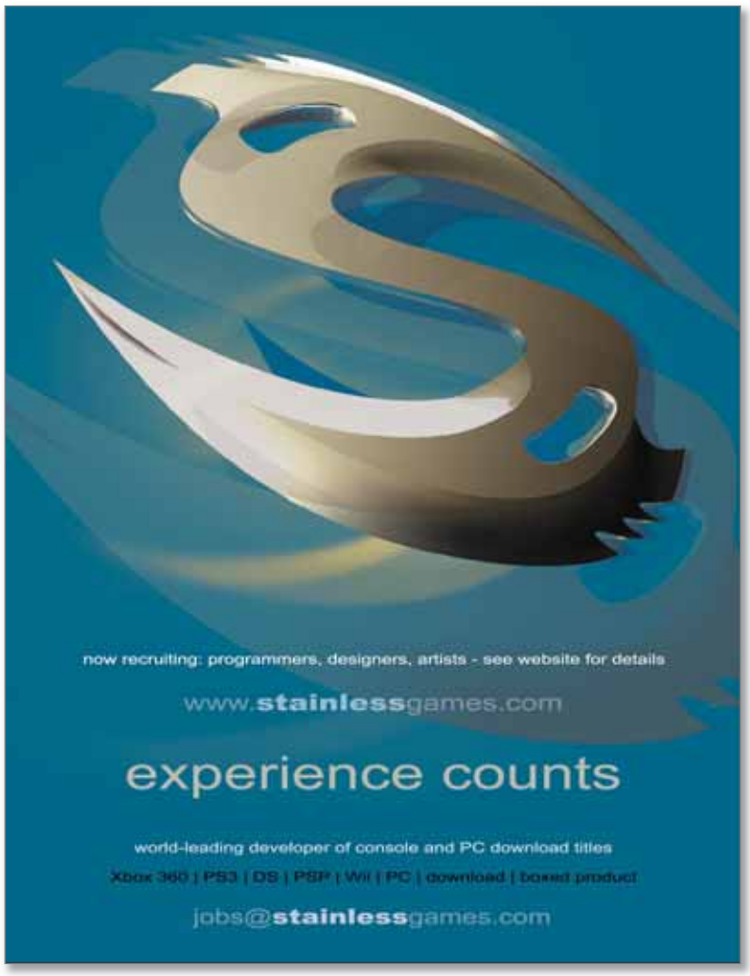
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Tools News

Havok MD O'Meara to leave

David O'Meara, MD of influential Dublin-based physics middleware developers Havok, has announced his intention to leave the firm in June this year.

O'Meara has been with Havok since 2003, initially as chief executive and later as MD after the acquisition of the company by Intel. He has yet to make any statements about his future plans. In an official comment, Havok stated O'meara will be pursuing "other business interests".

"Havok is a true Irish success story and continually demonstrates what it takes to forge ahead in a competitive global business. It is synonymous with quality and innovation," O'Meara said.

"I feel great about all the achievements and innovations at Havok over the past seven years and I consider myself fortunate to have worked with such a great team. The company is in good hands and its position in the global market is unmatched."

Havok chairman and Intel VP Renee James said a new MD will be appointed soon. "David will leave the company in a very strong position and we thank him for the leadership he has shown," she added.

www.havok.com

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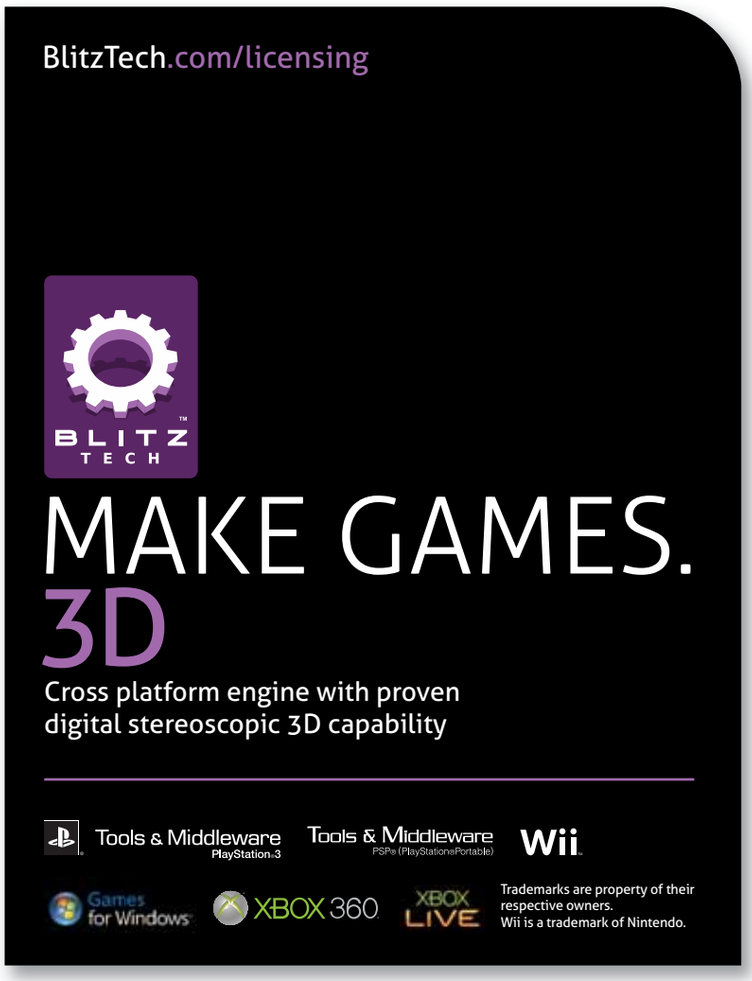

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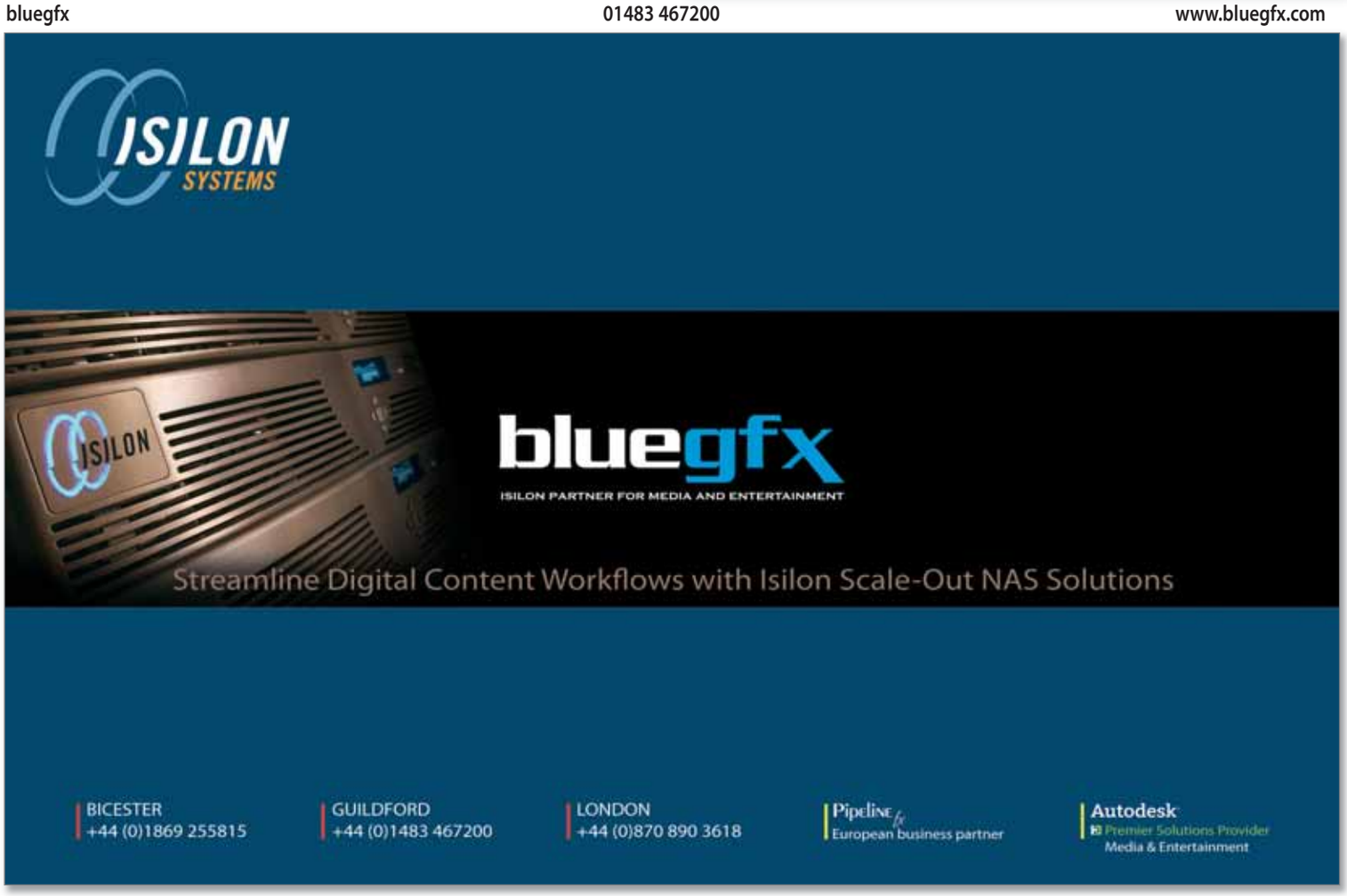

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Tool Spotlight

SCALEFORM GFX 3.2

TECHNOLOGY TYPE: MIDDLEWARE

Flash-based middleware providers and user interface creators Scaleform has released Scaleform GFx 3.2, an updated version of its UI technology.

Scaleform GFx 3.2 includes the 3Di suite of 3D Flash creation tools, which Scaleform claims will ease the development of 3D menus, heads up displays and in-game interfaces, including Stereoscopic 3D menus.

Also included is a Flash profiling tool for programmers and artists called AMP.

"Game developers are continually looking for ways to push the creative envelope while continuing to improve performance and reducing scheduling risk," said Scaleform president and CEO Brendan Iribe.

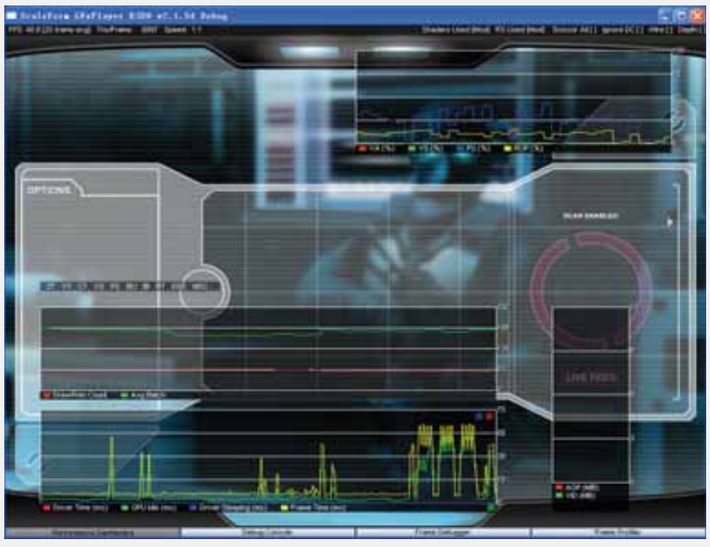
"Scaleform GFx 3.2 addresses those core challenges by giving UI designers more creative freedom with its dazzling 3Di rendering and animation, powerful new AMP performance-tuning toolset, and additional ready-to-use UI Kits that make it faster and easier than ever before to implement robust UIs."

Scaleform GFx 3.2 also includes the Scaleform AMP profiler, which grants a view of the CPU usage, rendering stats and memory allocation for developers while they tune Flash content.

Scaleform is also providing more UI kits, specifically a front-end Menu Kit and in-game 3Di Menu Kit, granting developers a starting point from which to design their individual UIs.

Scaleform GFx 3.2 supports native Flash filters and contains video tutorials for all of its major features.

"We're excited to lead the way for the future of interface design as developers take traditional 2D interfaces to the next dimension and create stunning in-game 3D interfaces that rival the CGI special effects of high-budget films," added Iribe.



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W: www.scaleform.com

Services News

This month: new faces at Side, Wiggin and Motives in Movement...

Side, the award winning providers of creative production services to the video games industry, have welcomed Ben Ryalls to their expanding team as business development manager. Ben has a background based in business development, sales, marketing and finance, and holds a lifelong passion for video games.

"For me this is an exceptional opportunity to use my existing skills in an industry I'm already passionate about. To be part of Side's ongoing growth is an exciting prospect."

Ben's role is to promote Side's range of story and character related services within the industry, as well as adding a spark of creative flair to the development of the business.

Creative Director Andy Emery said; "Ben's knowledge of the games industry and its mechanics, coupled with his sales and marketing skills make him a valuable asset to Side moving forward."

www.side.com

Media law firm Wiggin has hired Nav Sunner to head up its new Computer Games practice. Sunner joins the firm from Osborne Clarke, where he was co-head of the Interactive Entertainment Group.

Sunner will be responsible for developing a full service computer games practice at Wiggin and will support the firm's clients in their increasing interaction with the computer games industry and their moves into digital distribution.

Sunner previously held senior positions at the publishing divisions of Codemasters and Mastertronic.

"I am thrilled to be joining Wiggin and am excited by its plans for the future. It's a fantastic firm that truly understands sector focus and is filled with people who are passionate about the work they do and the clients they work with," Sunner said.

"The firm is also perfectly positioned to deal with the rapid convergence of media caused by the digital revolution. It's the ideal place for me to build a superb computer games practice and add to the success it has already achieved."

www.wiggin.co.uk

Pascal Langdale, the star of Quantic Dream's best selling title Heavy Rain, has launched a motion capture company called Motives in Movement.

The company claims to use a new method of generating and re-using mo-cap narrative film for games based on character behavior. MIM say this can cut mo-cap costs by around 30%.

The technology is based around catagorising behavior and producing pre-filmed reaction and expression libraries.

www.motivesinmovement.com

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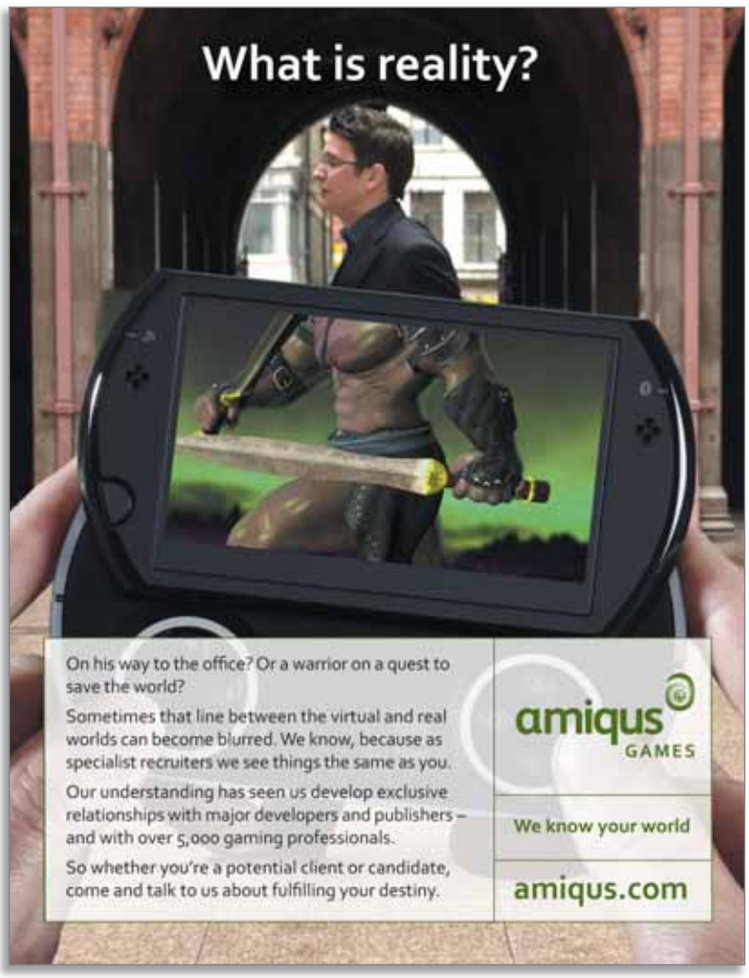
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Training News

Futureworks unites with Emergent

Futureworks school of media in Manchester has joined up with Emergent Game Technologies to enable its games students to use the Middleware engine Gamebryo Lightspeed in their studies.

Futureworks will become an academic partner of Emergent and will be the only private education institution in the UK authorised to utilise its Gamebryo engine. The partnership will also provide Futureworks students with access to the technology of eighteen of Emergent's industry partners.

Futureworks students of both the Games Design degree and the Game Development diploma will be able to make use of Gamebryo. The Futureworks games courses have been designed to enable students from each of the games disciplines to collaborate throughout their studies and the software will also aid in that process.

"This partnership with Emergent is the latest achievement in our ongoing realisation of ambitions to strengthen links with industry for the benefit of our students," said Futureworks' Ben Norris.

"Utilising cutting-edge software like Gamebryo will enable them to gain the skills and experience needed for a successful career in the games industry, and will ensure we are helping to cultivate a workforce with the expertise the UK needs to remain competitive. for many years to come"

www.futureworks.co.uk | www.emergent.net

TIGA outlines plans for game education reform

TIGA has published a 'Training, Education and Skills' manifesto detailing changes to the way it believes the national curriculum should operate. The suggestions heavily promote skills relating to the development industry.

In the manifesto foreword, TIGA states that a pilot SME Training Tax Relief (TTR) should be launched as a future tax credit for all staff and education outreach activities within video games development.

It also describes the need for 'generous' bursaries for trainee teachers in mathematics and the sciences, as well as larger golden hellos for these disciplines, and the wiping of student loans for teachers remaining in these disciplines for a set length of time.

More generally, the manifesto declares the need for greater expenditure on higher education, as well as heavier promotion of the video games industry as a career option in schools.

It also suggests reducing tuition fees for students studying maths and computer science degrees, stating that the cuts could come from either individual universities or by future Government intervention.

The manifesto seeks to promote the further funding of 'blue sky' research at top gaming universities which, it states, should be protected as it stands and increased in the future.

www.tiga.org

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KEYNOTE

Greg Zeschuk
Group Creative Officer, BioWare Studio Group, Electronic Arts Vice President, and Co-founder of BioWare

Other sessions include:

- **Opening up player metrics to the community in Just Cause 2**
  Jim Blackhurst & Mike Oldman, Square Enix
- **The Lowdown on Downloadable Content**
  Chris Bruce, SingStar, SCEE
- **Managing Risk from a Developer's Perspective**
  John Dennis, Team 17
- **Productivity: Make Life Easier for Your Team**
  Jason Avent, Disney Black Rock Studio
- **How to Make the Games Media Work for You**
  Johnny Minkley, Eurogamer
- **3DTV: The next dimension in game graphics**
  Mick Hocking, Sony Computer Entertainment Europe
- **All the right moves: grasping the possibilities of motion controllers**
  Andrew Oliver, Blitz Games Studios

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Louis Castle, Instant Action • **David Helgason,** Unity Technologies • **Mick Hocking**, SCEE • **Peter Molyneux**, Lionhead Studios • **Peter Hall**, Crytek • **Ben Minto**, EA DICE • **Ben Board**, Microsoft • **Alice Taylor**, Channel 4 • **Garry Taylor**, SCEE • **Alan Yu**, ngmoco • **Chris Pruitt**, google • **Dave Anderson**, BBC • **Richard Bates**, SCEE • **Jasper Koning**, Ronimo Games • **Jerome Hagen**, Microsoft • **Seb Canniff**, SCEE

Develop is a great platform to share our experiences in self-publishing. Having a conference like Develop right on our doorstep provides a wonderful opportunity to learn, share and meet up with friends in a relaxed atmosphere.
Andrew Eades, Relentless Software

Yes, it can help you make better games whether or not your console can also make calls. Yes, it's got top-tier talking talent. But at Develop they wear sun-cream. Who needs tapas at the Thirsty Bear when you can have a fish supper on Brighton Beach?
Ben Board, Microsoft

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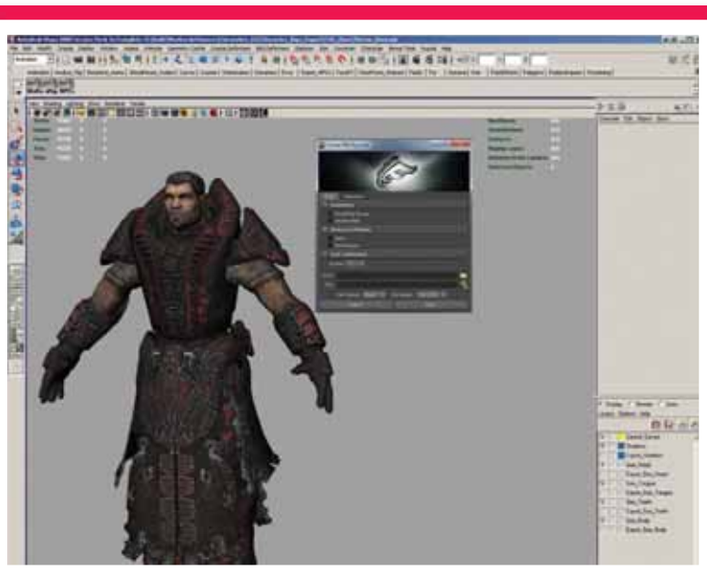

JUNE 2010

Middleware Special

Four years on from 'Middleware 2.0', we ask what's changed in the world of games technology

Region Focus: The Netherlands

We visit one of the cornerstones of European games dev

Develop Awards Finalists Guide

Find out who is in the running for the most hotly-contended prizes in games development

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ISSUE OUT (PRINT & ONLINE):
June 4th, 2010

DEADLINE:
Editorial: May 19th, 2010
Advertising: May 21st, 2010

JULY 2010

Region Focus: Brighton

We look at how the bohemian town is keeping at the vanguard of the UK's dev industry

PLUS

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Editorial: June 18th, 2010
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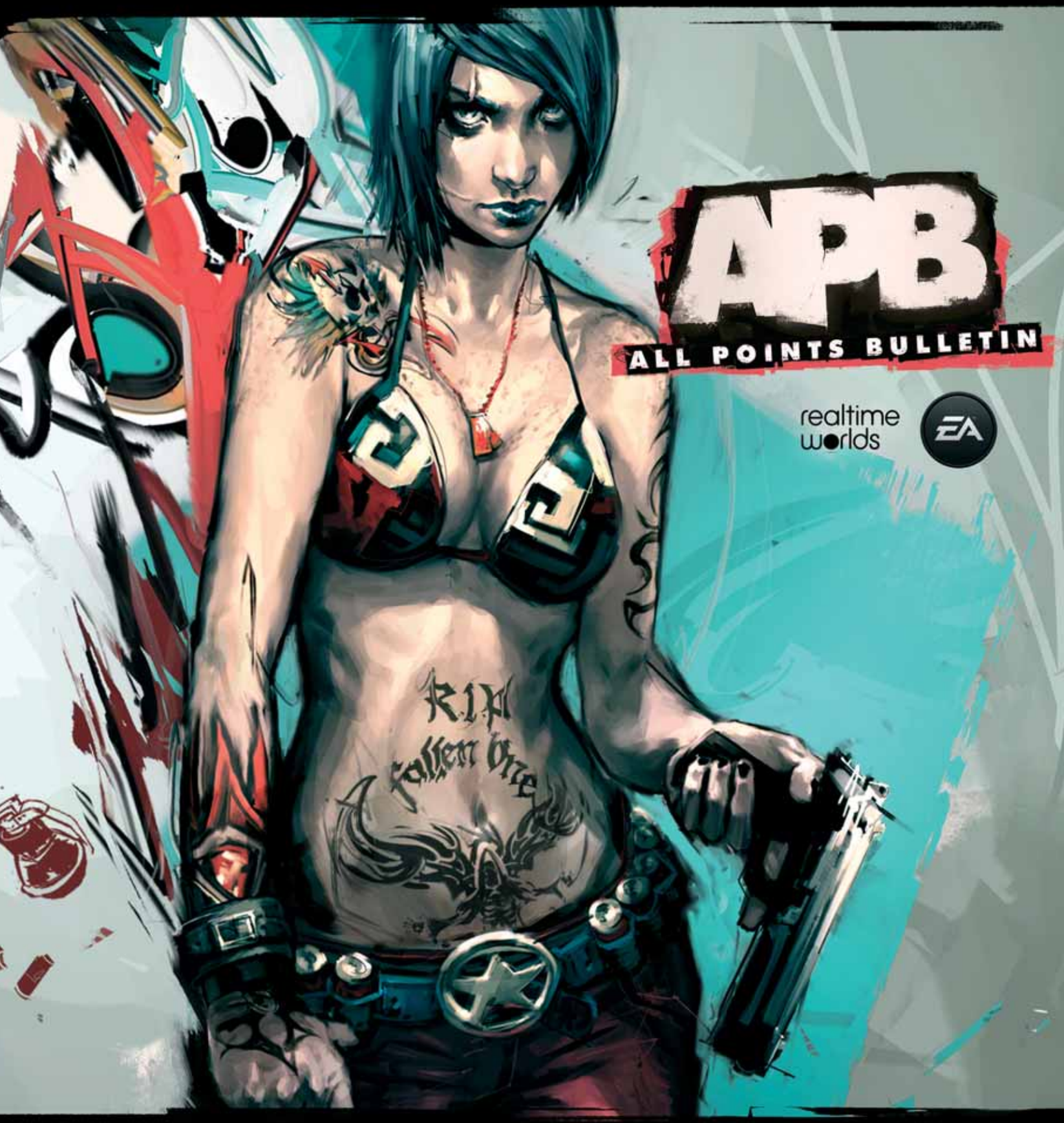

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